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SHAKESPEARE'S SONNETS.

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SHAKESPEARE'S SONNETS.

Edited with Notes and Introduction

BY

THOMAS TYLER, M.A.,

EDITOR OF "SHAKESPEARE'S SONNETS" (1609) IN FACSIMILE; AUTHOR OF "THE PHILOSOPHY OF 'HAMLET,'" "ECCLESIASTES," ETC

WITH PORTRAITS OF WILLIAM HERBERT, EARL OF PEMBROKE; OF HIS MOTHER, MARY, COUNTESS OF PEMBROKE AND OF MRS. MARY FITTON.

CHEAP REISSUE

WITH APPENDIX: THE HERBERT-FITTON THEORY OF SHAKESPEARE'S SONNETS; AND ADDITIONAL ILLUSTRATION: THE FITTON TOMB AT GAWSWORTH.

LONDON:
DAVID NUTT, 270–71 STRAND.
1899

'If any should be curious to discover
Whether to you I am a friend or lover,
Let them read Shakespeare's Sonnets, taking thence
A whetstone for their dull intelligence."

SHELLEY.

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PREFACE.

PREFIXED to the fac-simile edition of Shakespeare's Sonnets which, some three or four years ago, I edited for Dr. Furnivall was a somewhat brief Introduction in which was expressed the hope that I might be able before very long to publish a fuller account of the questions relating to the Sonnets, and also of the interpretation of these poems, than was possible in the limits within which that Introduction was confined. The hope thus expressed is realised in the present work.

The opinions set forth in the brief Introduction to which I have just alluded have been received with a measure of approval much greater than, considering their novelty in several particulars, could have been reasonably anticipated. Not unnaturally attention was specially directed to the evidence adduced concerning the persons with whom the Sonnets are mainly concerned. It is now about half a century since that judicious critic, Hallam, adopting the hypothesis of Boaden and Bright, said of the identification of William Herbert, Earl of Pembroke, with the high-born, beautiful, and gifted youth for whom Shakespeare expressed so devoted an attachment, that, though this was not then strictly proved, yet it was already sufficiently so "to demand our assent." The evidence which it is now possible to adduce places the theory in a very different position from that which, difficulties notwithstanding, obtained for it Hallam's marked approval. As to the lady with whom

the later Sonnets especially are concerned, no previous investigator had, so far as I am aware, proposed any identification wearing even the semblance of probability. But in endeavouring to pursue the investigation concerning Herbert further than it had been previously carried, the name of Queen Elizabeth's maid of honour, Mrs. Mary Fitton, came into view. And, indeed, if the identification of Shakespeare's male friend with Herbert has been proved, the facts of the Sonnets render certain the existence of an amorous connection between Herbert and the lady who may be spoken of as the Sonnet-heroine. There was at first but a possibility or slight probability; but gradually, as fact after fact was brought to light from contemporary records, the connected series closed so decisively round Mrs. Fitton that the proof in her case became not less clear than it had been in the case of Herbert. The facts are certainly remarkable; but, in connection with such a woman as Mrs. Fitton must have been, facts somewhat remarkable and extraordinary were to be expected. If a real addition to our knowledge of Shakespeare's life has been made, this result has not been attained by any unscientific and, so to speak, cabalistic methods, such as those which, unhappily, have of late attracted so large a share of public attention.

Apart, however, from the questions with which the Introduction is concerned, the present volume contains the fullest Commentary on the Sonnets which has yet been published. In saying this I have not the least wish to detract from the merits of Professor Dowden's valuable work issued a few years ago. I venture to hope that I shall not be found chargeable with what is said to be the usual fault of commentators, that they pass over places which are dark and difficult, and explain what needs no explanation. Having in view, however, readers of varying intelli-

gence and attainments, I have wished, in elucidation, to err by excess rather than defect. In interpreting some very difficult places I have received valuable assistance which will be found duly acknowledged in the commentary on the respective passages. The text I have given is somewhat conservative, but there appeared to be practical difficulties in the way of printing, as the basis of the commentary, the text of the Quarto of 1609, with its spelling and punctuation.

Thanks are due to the Marquis of Salisbury and his librarian, Mr. R. T. Gunton, for very valuable information obtained from documents in his lordship's possession at Hatfield, to Lord De Tabley for assistance of a similar nature, and, for important aid of various kinds, to Dr. F. J. Furnivall, to Dr. Richard Garnett, to Mr. George Scharf, Director of the National Portrait Gallery, to Mr. J. P. Earwaker, to the Rev. P. A. Lyons, to Mr. G. Bernard Shaw, to Mr. W. T. Lynn, and to Mr. Kensington, of the Department of Manuscripts, British Museum. To my friend the Rev. W. A. Harrison very special acknowledgment is required.

With regard to books consulted, I ought, perhaps, to make particular mention of the work of Professor Dowden previously alluded to, and of the Shakespeare-Lexicon of Dr. A. Schmidt.

T. T.

NOTES RELATING TO THE PORTRAITS.

WILLIAM HERBERT, EARL OF PEMBROKE.

The portrait of William Herbert, third Earl of Pembroke, which serves as frontispiece, is from a fine print in the British Museum. The engraving was executed, as the appended inscription shows, from a painting by D. Mytens, by the order of Philip Herbert, his brother, who succeeded to the title. It has thus some right to precedence before other engravings as representing William Herbert in the latter part of his life, about the age, perhaps, of forty-five. At the Portrait Exhibition of 1866 a portrait was exhibited, said to represent William Herbert, with staff of office in hand. It depicted a man old and broken down in constitution. If this was really a portrait of William Herbert, it must have been taken, it would seem, very shortly before his death, when, possibly through the cause mentioned by Clarendon, his constitution had been fatally undermined, and his strength and vivacity were vanishing.[1] The source of our portrait is clearly not the painting at Wilton, engraved by Lodge, and attributed to Vandyck. A comparison with Lodge's portrait makes this sufficiently evident. Indeed, if Vandyck painted the Wilton portrait, it would

[1] For a sight of a photograph of this portrait I am indebted to Mr. L. G. Holland, assistant librarian of the National Portrait Gallery.

seem that the portrait must have been executed after William Herbert's death from some previous representation; and this is, I believe, asserted to have been the fact. The present Lord Pembroke is said to have lately acquired a portrait of William Herbert by Mytens; but I am unable to say whether this portrait is identical with that from which the British Museum engraving was executed. There is no difficulty in supposing that a man of the appearance represented in the engraving may have been, from eighteen to twenty-one, exceedingly handsome.[1]

The MS. on the authority of which the autograph (of reduced size, however) is given is in the British Museum. The initial of the Christian name is not prefixed, though William Herbert's father seems always, or usually, to have signed "H. Pembroke," in accordance with what had been

[1] The following from a letter of Sir Dudley Carleton's to Mr. Winwood, dated January 1604, and given in the *Winwood Memorials* (vol. ii. p. 43), may be added here as of interest on more than one account:—William Herbert is brought before us as an actor; Philip Herbert was one of Shakespeare's patrons, according to the Folio of 1623, and it is noteworthy that the lady he married was sister to the Bridget Vere who in 1597 was about to be married to William Herbert (p. 45):—

"On St. John's Day we had the Marriage of Sir Philip Herbert and the Lady Susan performed at Whitehall, with all the Honour could be done a great favourite. The Court was great, and for that Day put on the best Bravery. The Prince and Duke of Holst led the Bride to Church, the Queen follow'd her from thence. The King gave her, and she in her Tresses, and Trinketts brided and bridled it so handsomly, and indeed became her self so well, that the King said, if he were unmarried he would not give her, but keep her himself. The Marriage Dinner was kept in the great Chamber, where the Prince and the Duke of Holst, and the great Lords and Ladies accompanied the Bride. The Ambassador of Venice was the only bidden Guest of Strangers, and he had place above the Duke of Holst, which the Duke took not well. . . . At Night there was a Mask in the Hall, which for Conceit and Fashion was suitable to the Occasion. The Actors, were the Earle of Pembrook, the Lord Willoby, Sir Samuel Hays, Sir Thomas Germain, Sir Robert Cary, Sir John Lee, Sir Richard Preston, and Sir Thomas Bager. . . . No Ceremony was omitted of Bride-Cakes, Points, Garters, and Gloves, which have been ever since the Livery of the Court."

the ordinary custom. The practice, indeed, continued by no means unusual for a good while afterwards, showing that the individual name was not by any means so fully merged in the title as is now the case. This is of some importance with regard to the matter discussed on p. 72.

MARY, COUNTESS OF PEMBROKE.

This portrait, the original of which is at Penshurst, is of importance with reference to the words of the third Sonnet:—

> "Thou art thy mother's glass, and she in thee
> Calls back the lovely April of her prime."

The allusion is entirely accordant with the beauty of "Sidney's sister, Pembroke's mother."

MRS. MARY FITTON.

When I wrote what is to be found on page 80 (note), I had not seen the coloured sculptures, in Gawsworth Church, of Lady Alice Fitton and her children, Edward, Richard, Anne, and Mary. I might possibly have done so, if I had not been influenced by the statement of Mr. J. P. Earwaker (*East Cheshire*, vol. ii. p. 582) that the figures just alluded to "show traces of having been highly coloured."[1] Such

[1] Of this monument Earwaker says: "It was placed in memory of Dame Alice Fitton, the widow of Sir Edward Fitton, Knt., and daughter and heiress of Sir John Holcroft, of Holcroft, co. Lancaster, Knt., who was buried at Gawsworth, Jan. 4, 1626–7. She is represented wearing a large hood, her head resting upon her right arm, her left hand being placed on a book which rests on her knees. In front of her are the kneeling figures of her two sons, Sir Edward Fitton, the first Baronet (so created in 1617), and then deceased (he died in 1619), and Richard

"traces," it seemed, would not give satisfactory evidence as to Mary Fitton's hair and complexion; and I did not suppose that any very trustworthy representation of the lady's features would be found. I was agreeably surprised, on a visit which I made with express reference to this work, to find that the colouring was in a much better condition than Earwaker's remark had led me to expect, and that the sculpture had been executed in a good style of monumental art. There was the dark complexion, together with the black hair and eyes, so graphically depicted in the second series of Sonnets. The colour of the sculptured Mary Fitton was the more remarkable as her brother Edward is represented on the monument as fair with a light moustache. The features also showed accordance with Shakespeare's repeated assertion that the lady of the Sonnets was not beautiful. And that the lips and the eyes were features expressing the predominance of sensual passion was not to be mistaken. That such a woman should exercise a certain kind of fascination on the opposite sex can scarcely be difficult for a spectator to believe. The expression of Mary's face contrasts strongly with that of her sister, Lady Newdigate. If the monument was executed in 1626 or later, Mary Fitton must have been forty-eight years old. The face in the sculpture would seem to represent a younger person. Perhaps, like her brothers, she may have been already dead, and the sculptor may have been compelled to work from a

Fitton, Esq., who died in 1610. Behind her are the kneeling figures of her two daughters, Anne and Mary. These figures are all habited in the costume of the early part of the seventeenth century, and show traces of having been highly coloured." The monument has now no accompanying inscription, referring to the figures, but the identification might have been inferred with probability from the contiguous Fitton monuments, from the costumes, and from the known facts with regard to Lady Alice and her children. Mr. Earwaker, however, was so fortunate as to possess a seventeenth century MS. of "Cheshire Church Notes," which gave more direct evidence. See his note on page above mentioned, and vol. i. p. xxvi.

portrait. Fortunately, however, the work appears to have been well done. The coiffure is very noteworthy. At first it may seem doubtful whether there is really hair rising from the forehead, and then trained back on the head over some support, but a careful examination of the monument leaves no doubt concerning the matter. It may be, *possibly*, that we have a representation of false hair arranged very artificially; but certainly the hair is black, and so far agrees entirely with the portraiture in the Sonnets. The hair thus agrees also with the colour of the complexion and eyes. Unfortunately the tip of the nose has been broken off, and the hands appear to have gone long since. But, according to the drawing of the monument figured by Earwaker, the hands of Lady Newdigate have disappeared since that drawing was made in 1873; and so also has Richard Fitton lost entirely, or nearly so, the front part of his face. It is perhaps worth while to mention that Mary Fitton is represented as short in stature, or, at least, as shorter than her sister. The engraving has been executed after a drawing made at Gawsworth expressly for this work.[1]

[1] I may here append a word with regard to an objection made by Mr. S. L. Lee in the article "Mary Fitton," *Dictionary of National Biography*, to the assertion that in Kemp's Dedication of his *Nine Days' Wonder* the name "Anne" was wrongly substituted for "Mary" (*cf.* pp. 76, 77, in the present work). It is, however, certain that in 1600 there was no maid of honour Mrs. Anne Fitton as described by Kemp. Recently the Rev. W. A. Harrison—to whom is due the first indication of the connection between Kemp's Dedication and the dark lady of the Sonnets (*Academy*, July 5, 1884)—happened to find in Lysons's *Environs of London*, vol. iii. p. 450, an extract from the register of St. Dunstan's, Stepney, stating that Anne Fitton, daughter of Sir Edward Fitton, was married to John Newdigate on April 30, 1587 (when she would have been only in her thirteenth year). This extract has since been verified by inspection of the register. As this marriage was certainly not set aside as invalid, it seems sufficiently clear that Anne Fitton could not possibly have been maid of honour in 1600. There must, therefore, have been a mistake made by some one. But whether the fault lay with Kemp or his printer it is scarcely possibly now to determine.

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SHAKESPEARE'S SONNETS.

INTRODUCTION.

CHAPTER I.

GENERAL VIEW OF THE SONNETS.

§ 1. *Alleged Obscurity.*—Of the numerous questions suggested by Shakespeare's works, those which relate to the Sonnets have been regarded as not the least obscure, perhaps even as the most difficult. Yet for the poet's biography so scanty materials are presented elsewhere, that the Sonnets have, in this respect, peculiar attractiveness. None of Shakespeare's creations, not even Hamlet or Prospero, can be completely and in all respects identified with the poet himself. His dramas may be regarded as a many-coloured veil, concealing, or but imperfectly and intermittently disclosing, the soul of the great artificer. But in the Sonnets we come nearer to that august presence, and attain a more continuous, if not an unrestricted, view. The possibility of this closer approach to Shakespeare's personality has, however, been doubted. "His supposed self-revelation in the Sonnets," it has been said, "is so obscure, that only a few outlines can be traced by the boldest conjecture." "In spite of the ingenuity of commentators, it is difficult, and even impossible, to derive any knowledge of Shakespeare's

inner history from the Sonnets."[1] And another critic remarks, "Something which seems more than human in immensity of range and calmness of insight moves before us in the Plays; but from the nature of dramatic writing, the author's personality is inevitably veiled; . . . and even when we turn to the *Sonnets*, though each is an autobiographical confession, we find ourselves equally foiled. These revelations of the poet's innermost nature appear to teach us less of the man than the tone of mind which we trace, or seem to trace, in *Measure for Measure*, *Hamlet*, and the *Tempest;* the strange imagery of passion which passes over the magic mirror has no tangible existence before or behind it."[1] It may be hoped, however, that the reader who follows the present inquiry will come to a different conclusion. Of the several problems which present themselves, some of the more important will, it is believed, yield entirely to ordinary and well-understood critical methods. With regard to others, without resorting to any special expedient for "solving the Sonnets," we may at least attain results of reasonable probability.

§ 2. *Aim and Intention.*— At the outset, and on a merely general view, one or two remarks may be made as to the object which Shakespeare had in view when composing these poems. The Sonnets have been described as "autobiographical." Such a description may possibly mislead. It may be regarded as implying that the poet's chief intent was to communicate, either to his contemporaries or to posterity, some particulars in his inner life or his outer history. Certainly such a view would be inaccurate. A man's letters to his friends cannot be correctly described as autobiography, even though they may convey important information concerning various facts in his history. And Shakespeare's Sonnets are for the most part poetical epistles.

[1] J. R. Green, *History of the English People*, vol. ii. pp. 473, 483.
[2] F. T. Palgrave, *Songs and Sonnets of Shakespeare*, p. 239.

Some of them have, no doubt, a different character, but these we may for the present disregard, as we are taking a very broad and general view; and we need not now consider the question whether Shakespeare wrote all or any of the Sonnets with a view to subsequent publication.

§ 3. *Poetical Form.*—The poetical form which Shakespeare employed has been criticised as being inferior to that which Milton used so nobly some thirty or forty years later. For our present purpose it is unnecessary to distinguish between the Miltonic and the Petrarchan Sonnet. Of the latter, an eminent authority on the subject has said that it aims at sonority, while "the quest of the Shakespearian Sonnet" is "sweetness; and the sweetest of all possible arrangements in English versification is a succession of decasyllabic quatrains in alternate rhymes, knit together and clinched by a couplet."[1] On this view, the fitness of the form which Shakespeare adopted can scarcely be questioned. It was a form, moreover, which we may regard as better suited for poetical epistles of varying length than the more sonorous Petrarchan or Miltonic Sonnet, though the latter may deserve to be preferred for self-contained and independent poems. Whether poems consisting of several Sonnet-stanzas would always be the best form for poetical epistles, and whether Shakespeare's plenitude of poetical force would not have been unduly hampered by any form of Sonnet, are questions which we need not attempt now to determine either one way or the other. It must be observed, however, that though the form which Shakespeare adopted now bears his name, yet it had been moulded on English ground by his poetical predecessors and contemporaries, and Sonnets of similar form had been linked together; as, for example, by Spenser.[2]

[1] Mr. T. Watts in *Encyclopædia Britannica* (9th edit.), art. "Sonnet." *Cf.* also Mr. William Sharp's Introduction to *Sonnets of the Century.*

[2] The variation in Spenser's Sonnets need not be here taken into account.

That a single Shakespearian Sonnet is comparatively seldom an independent poem will be sufficiently manifest hereafter. It may be enough here to give one or two examples of continuation and connection. Thus Sonnet 65 begins—

> "Since brass, nor stone, nor earth, nor boundless sea,
> But sad mortality o'ersways their power," &c.

Here the word "since" manifestly refers to the preceding Sonnet, which tells of the ravages of Time; of lofty towers being "down rased," of "brass eternal, slave to mortal rage," of "the firm soil" increasing with the loss of "the wat'ry main," and of "the hungry ocean gaining advantage on the kingdom of the shore." Not much farther on are four Sonnets (71 to 74) linked together by the thought that the person addressed may survive the poet, and, through excessive love, lament unduly for his death. The first of these Sonnets puts a limit to the grief: all mourning is to be over when the bell ceases tolling:—

> "No longer mourn for me when I am dead,
> Than you shall hear the surly sullen bell
> Give warning to the world that I am fled
> From this vile world, with vilest worms to dwell."

The reason alleged in the last two lines of the Sonnet is that the "wise world" may possibly make a mock at undue lamentation over one so unworthy. The thought of these last two lines is enlarged upon in the following Sonnet (72), in which the poet asserts that his works do not merit esteem, though they are loved by the person addressed. This excessive love is reverted to in 73, but accounted for differently. The poet is in the autumn of life, the time of yellow leaves and leafless boughs:—

> "This thou perceiv'st, which makes thy love more strong,
> To love that well which thou must leave ere long."

Of the Sonnets mentioned above (71 to 74), the last urges the consolatory thought that when the poet's body has

become the "prey of worms," and has been yielded up to the earth, a memorial will remain in his verses. In these something of his spirit and his life will be treasured up:—

> "But be contented: when that fell arrest
> Without all bail shall carry me away,
> My life hath in this line some interest,
> Which for memorial still with thee shall stay," &c.

Perhaps the longest chain of Sonnets is 100 to 126, written after a period of separation and estrangement. These are to be regarded, most probably, as a single poem, giving various explanations relating to this period, and asserting the poet's undiminished affection.

§ 4. *Orderly Arrangement.*—But are the Sonnets, as a whole, arranged in due order and in chronological sequence? In answer to this question it may be said, that if, as we have seen, some portions are duly arranged, this will render it to some extent probable that the case is the same with the whole collection. But here it should be observed that the Sonnets are to be divided into two, or, perhaps still better, into three series. By far the larger proportion, 1 to 126, are addressed to an intimate male friend of the poet, a youth high-born, and wealthy, and beautiful. 127 to 152 are concerned mainly with a certain lady of dark complexion, the poet's mistress. Then there remain the last two Sonnets in the collection, 153 and 154, which have a character of their own. The question as to the order of arrangement is, however, chiefly of importance with respect to the first series, 1 to 126. Or, if we put aside 100 to 126, mentioned just above, we may restrict the question within narrower limits, and ask, Are 1 to 99 arranged in order of time, in the right order? In reply, it may be observed that the collection begins with seventeen Sonnets urging on the poet's friend the duty and desirableness of perpetuating his beauty in offspring. The Sonnets concerned with this subject are found together, not scattered promiscuously throughout the entire number—a fact which

at once suggests the idea of arrangement. Then we observe that, although in one of these first Sonnets the poet, complying with old custom, addresses his friend as "love" (13), yet, on the whole, the language employed does not express an affection so warm and intimate as that which manifests itself in some of the Sonnets which follow. We remark, also, that, even in these first Sonnets, there are traces of a melancholic view of the world. Youth and beauty are fleeting. Life's golden summer must give place to "hideous winter." Old age creeps on with stealthy tread, disfiguring the glory of manhood with bareness and with wrinkles. Time's remorseless scythe will level all. But melancholy thus expressed appears but mild when compared with what is to follow. By and by the gloom will deepen into pessimistic darkness. The poet, wearied with the world and its perversities, will cry out for "restful death" (66). Manifestly, when this occurs, an exhortation to marry and beget offspring will have become incongruous. Further evidence of due order and arrangement is furnished by a number of Sonnets relating to another poet, a rival, or supposed rival, for the friend's favour. The apprehension of rivalry is at first ambiguously expressed (75, line 6), then (78 *seq.*) more and more openly adverted to, till in 86 there is a scarcely doubtful designation of the person intended. In 87, Shakespeare, not having succeeded in ousting his rival, bids his friend farewell. Thus, that the Sonnets relating to the rival poet are in the right order seems scarcely open to question. And considering that we have to do with poetical epistles, no valid objection is furnished by the fact that in 77 and 81 the poet glances aside for a moment from this subject. Such divergence would be quite suitable in a letter. There is a somewhat similar series, though not unbroken, concerned with an offence against the poet committed by his friend. Here again there appears no reason to conclude that the order in which the Sonnets are found is not the order of composi-

tion. But in connection with this preliminary view it is unnecessary to adduce further evidence. The burden of proof lies on those who object to the order in which the Sonnets were first printed. It is for them to show that the order thus given is not the right order.

§ 5. *Poetical Merit.*—As to the poetical merit of the Sonnets, a few remarks may not be out of place, though it is scarcely necessary that very much should be said; and the enumeration of single lines or phrases which excel in strength or beauty cannot be attempted. Some inequality with regard to poetical merit was of course inevitable. Moreover, the laudation of the youth addressed, and especially of his personal beauty, may seem sometimes overstrained,[1] and perhaps, on a first perusal, a little monotonous. Of this fault, if such it be, the poet appears himself to have been conscious:—

> "Therefore my verse, to constancy confin'd,
> One thing expressing, leaves out difference.
> Fair, kind, and true, is all my argument,—
> Fair, kind, and true, varying to other words;
> And in this change is my invention spent,
> Three themes in one, which wondrous scope affords" (105).

76 also may be compared, where the poet speaks of his verse being "barren of new pride," and of his "writing still all one, ever the same."

That there should be sometimes exhibited the tendency of the age to quaint conceits is not wonderful. Moreover, since Shakespeare is the author, we may expect to find highly metaphoric language and not infrequent obscurity. But there is also Shakespeare's exuberant strength, like "teeming autumn, big with rich increase." There is majesty and surpassing beauty. In majestic strength the Sonnet on sexual passion (129) must claim pre-eminence.

[1] Compare some severe but not quite unjust remarks of Hallam (*Literature of Europe*, Part III. chap. v. § 48).

As to beauty, among several claimants, it is difficult to say which should be preferred. There is remarkable beauty in Sonnet 116, especially in the first eight lines :—

> "Let me not to the marriage of true minds
> Admit impediments. Love is not love
> Which alters when it alteration finds,
> Or bends with the remover to remove :
> O no ; it is an ever-fixed mark,
> That looks on tempests, and is never shaken ;
> It is the star to every wandering bark,
> Whose worth's unknown, although his height be taken."

Then there is the 33rd Sonnet, with its magnificent description of a brilliant morning, whose splendour becomes darkened by dense and threatening clouds :—

> "Full many a glorious morning have I seen
> Flatter the mountain-tops with sovereign eye,
> Kissing with golden face the meadows green,
> Gilding pale streams with heavenly alchymy ;
> Anon permit the basest clouds to ride
> With ugly rack on his celestial face,
> And from the forlorn world his visage hide,
> Stealing unseen to west with this disgrace."

In neither case, however—though for different reasons—do the six lines concluding the Sonnet seem equal to those which have preceded. I may omit some Sonnets deserving mention, but there are two (29, 30) which must not be passed over. In the second of these (30), the poet declares that the disappointments he has endured and the grievous bereavements which death has inflicted are all compensated for by the love of his friend :—

> "When to the sessions of sweet silent thought
> I summon up remembrance of things past,
> I sigh the lack of many a thing I sought,
> And with old woes new wail my dear time's waste :
> Then can I drown an eye, unus'd to flow,
> For precious friends hid in death's dateless night,
> And weep afresh love's long-since cancell'd woe,
> And moan the expense of many a vanish'd sight :
> Then can I grieve at grievances foregone,

And heavily from woe to woe tell o'er
The sad account of fore-bemoaned moan,
Which I new pay as if not paid before.
But if the while I think on thee, dear friend,
All losses are restor'd, and sorrows end."

The reader should remark in passing the frequent use of alliteration, of which, however, he may find plenty of examples elsewhere in these poems. The chief fault of this Sonnet is in the concluding couplet, which seems somewhat disappointing and inadequate. The 29th Sonnet may not be in all respects quite equal to that last given, but it certainly has not in its conclusion the fault just alluded to:—

"When in disgrace with Fortune and men's eyes,
I all alone beweep my outcast state,
And trouble deaf Heaven with my bootless cries,
And look upon myself, and curse my fate,
Wishing me like to one more rich in hope,
Featur'd like him, like him with friends possess'd,
Desiring this man's art, and that man's scope,
With what I most enjoy contented least;
Yet in these thoughts myself almost despising,
Haply I think on thee; and then my state,
Like to the lark at break of day arising
From sullen earth, sings hymns at heaven's gate;
For thy sweet love remember'd such wealth brings,
That then I scorn to change my state with kings."[1]

[1] Wordsworth selected on account of "the various merits of thought and language in Shakespeare's Sonnets" the following, adding, however, that there are "many others":—27, 29, 30, 32, 33, 54, 64, 66, 68, 73, 76, 86, 91, 92, 93, 97, 98, 105, 107, 108, 109, 111, 113, 114, 116, 117, 129. Mr. T. Hall Caine, in his *Sonnets of Three Centuries*, gives 29, 30, 33, 55, 64, 66, 70, 71, 73, 90, 94, 97, 107, 116, 129, 138, 146. Mr. J. Dennis, *English Sonnets*, gives 8, 17, 18, 27, 29, 30, 32, 33, 38, 54, 55, 60, 61, 64, 65, 66, 71, 73, 76, 87, 91, 92, 98, 104, 106, 116, 129, 139, 146. Mr. S. Waddington, *English Sonnets by Poets of the Past*, selects 30, 33, 54, 66, 71, 73, 98, 99, 106, 139, 143, 146. It will thus be seen that, with regard to the excellence of certain Sonnets, as 30, 33, 116, there is a remarkable consensus of opinion. Mr. Swinburne, however (quoted by Dowden), speaks of the Sonnets 127 to 154 as "incomparably the more important and altogether precious division of the Sonnets." Mr. F. T. Palgrave, in his *Songs and Sonnets of William Shakespeare*, prints the whole, with the exception only of 20, 151, 153, 154.

§ 6. *Concerned with Fact.*—But it is neither from beauty and sweetness, nor majestic strength, that the Sonnets derive their chief attractiveness. Rather—in accordance with what was said at the commencement of this chapter—must we attribute the keen interest with which they are investigated to the hope of gaining some additional knowledge with regard to Shakespeare and his surroundings, or of making a nearer approach to the poet's personality. But are the Sonnets concerned with actual facts? Are they not rather to be regarded as mere exercises in verse? If this question could be answered in the affirmative, still the interest and value of the Sonnets would be great, as showing the themes on which Shakespeare elected to discourse. But that any competent critic should have looked on the Sonnets as mere exercises in verse can scarcely be other than surprising. The intensity of feeling which they display is not to be mistaken, and the incidents alluded to cannot be conceived of as fictions. Are we to suppose Shakespeare urging in seventeen Sonnets an ideal youth to beget ideal offspring? Then, as to the incident alluded to in the 40th and various other Sonnets, is it in the least degree probable that the poet speaks of a purely imaginary offence and grievance? Or, if this be thought not incredible, take the Sonnets relating to the rival poet (86 *al.*). Fortunately it has become possible to indicate the person actually intended. But if this had not been the case, the evidence of jealous feeling would have been sufficiently clear. It has been suggested, however, that though in relation to the first series of Sonnets the evidence of fact and reality is not to be denied, yet the case is otherwise with the later Sonnets concerned with the dark lady (127 to 152). In all probability this suggestion had its origin in the wish to free Shakespeare's moral character from certain possible imputations. But however commendable the motive, such a view must be rejected. The impress of reality is stamped on these Sonnets with unmis-

takable clearness; and besides, several of them are linked indissolubly to the first series (as 40 to 144). We must therefore maintain—whatever may be the consequences resulting from this position—that the Sonnets as a whole are concerned with actual fact. At the same time we must beware of treating them as though they were mere prosaic history. Their language is the language of poetry, sometimes of compliment, and as such it should certainly be interpreted.

CHAPTER II.

THE DEDICATION.

To the original edition of the Sonnets was prefixed the following Dedication :—

TO . THE . ONLIE . BEGETTER . OF .
THESE . INSVING . SONNETS .
Mr. W. H. ALL. HAPPINESSE.
AND . THAT . ETERNITIE .
PROMISED .
BY .
OVR . EVER-LIVING . POET .
WISHETH .
THE . WELL-WISHING .
ADVENTVRER . IN .
SETTING .
FORTH.

T. T.

With respect to the initials, it may be remarked that on the titles of books the representation of names by initial letters was formerly much more common than is the case at present. As to who was intended by the final "T. T." there need be no question, since under date "20 Maij," 1609, "Shakespeares sonnettes" were entered in the Stationers' Register to Thomas Thorpe :—

"**Thomas Thorpe** Entred for his copie vnder th[e h]andes of master WILSON and master **Lownes** Warden a Booke called SHAKESPEARE'S *sonnettes* vj[d].[1]"

[1] Arber's *Transcript*, vol. iii. 183b.

Thorpe, therefore, was "the well-wishing adventurer in setting forth," that is, of course, in publishing; and there can be no question as to the meaning of "our ever-living poet." This expression can refer to no other than the author of the Sonnets. There remain, however, two questions which have given rise to much discussion: What is meant by the expression "the onlie begetter"? and, Who was "Mr. W. H."?

As to the meaning of the expression "the onlie begetter," it has been alleged that the word "beget" was used as meaning "get," "obtain," "procure." The "onlie begetter" therefore must, on this view, be the person who collected or obtained the Sonnets, and handed them over to Thorpe. Now if it be admitted that possibly the word "beget" might be used with the meaning just adverted to, this will not settle the question we have before us. We must notice, first, that it is obviously "Mr. W. H." who is designated the "onlie begetter;" but this fact does not help us very far towards ascertaining the sense of the latter expression. But reading the dedicatory inscription a little further, we find that to the "onlie begetter" eternity had been "promised by our ever-living poet;" for no other construction is at all reasonable or probable. There is thus a manifest reference to the numerous places in the Sonnets in which the poet promised to the beautiful youth he addressed "a life beyond life," enduring so long as the world itself shall endure. But still it may be contended, though Mr. W. H. is to be identified with the beautiful youth to whom the poet had "promised eternity," this does not determine certainly the meaning of "the only begetter." From Thorpe's point of view, Mr. W. H.'s chief merit may have been that he had collected the Sonnets, and then handed them over for publication. But such a view can scarcely appear in any way likely. Moreover, there is in the Sonnets one place particularly which should go very far towards determining the sense of the disputed words. The passage is to be found in Sonnet 38:—

"O, give thyself the thanks, if aught in me
Worthy perusal stand against thy sight;
For who's so dumb that cannot write to thee,
When thou thyself dost give invention light?
Be thou the tenth Muse, ten times more in worth
Than those old nine, which rhymers invocate;
And he that calls on thee, *let him bring forth*
Eternal numbers to outlive long date.
If my slight Muse do please these curious days,
The pain be mine, but thine shall be the praise."[1]

Here the beautiful youth appears as the cause of the poet's writing verses "worthy perusal." Whoever invokes this powerful aid is to "bring forth eternal numbers to outlive long date." The quotation thus made must go far towards fixing the sense of "the onlie begetter." Evidence thus adduced from the Sonnets themselves as to the "begetter" must be regarded as of especial importance. But to speak of thought, invention, and literary composition as partaking of the nature of pregnancy and parturition appears to have been a metaphor common enough with the Elizabethan poets. Thus in 59, 2–4, "Our brains . . . labouring for invention bear amiss the second burthen of a former child." And Spenser in his second Sonnet says:—

"Unquiet thought! whom at the first I bred
Of th' inward bale of my love-pined heart;
And sithens have with sighs and sorrows fed,
Till greater than my womb thou waxen art," &c.

To the explanation of "the onlie begetter" thus given it may be objected, however, that the beautiful youth is not the subject of *all* the Sonnets. But certainly he is the subject of very much the larger portion; and this portion, moreover, stands first, and next after the Dedication. He might, therefore, very well be spoken of as "the onlie begetter of these insuing sonnets," the last twenty-eight, like the *Lover's Complaint*, appended to the first edition, being disregarded. "Thus," as Dowden observes, "was

[1] It appears from this couplet that the Sonnets were not intended solely for the eye of the person first addressed.

Mr. W. H. the begetter of these poems, and from the point of view of a complimentary dedication, he might well be called the only begetter."[1]

But who was Mr. W. H.? This question will be further considered in the sequel (Chap. VII.). But there are several answers which, supported by no valid evidence, need only the slightest mention. Thus there have been suggested Mr. William Hughes, Mr. William Hall, Mr. William Hart, Mr. William Hathaway, Mr. William Shakespeare (the H of the Dedication being a misprint for S), and also Mr. William *Himself*. With regard to the first of these suggestions, it may be perhaps mentioned that its author, Tyrwhitt, based it on the fact that in the first edition, at the seventh line of the 20th Sonnet, the word "*Hews*" (hues) is in italics, and begins with a capital, thus:—

"A man in hew all *Hews* in his controwling."

But in other Sonnets both italics and capitals are used far too freely, and without any special emphasis being intended, to allow us for a moment to conclude that "the onlie begetter of these insuing sonnets" was a Mr. William Hughes, otherwise unknown.

According to another opinion, the order of the initials W. H. has been purposely changed, for the sake of disguise, from H. W. The person really intended is Henry Wriothesley, Earl of Southampton, to whom the *Venus and Adonis* and *Lucrece* were dedicated. On this opinion some observations will be found in Chapter IV. But before making any further attempt to identify "Mr. W. H.," it may be convenient to find, if we can, some sure indications of time—a matter of pre-eminent importance in relation to the Sonnets.

[1] Mr. P. A. Daniel has suggested that "onlie" may be used with the sense of "chief." Such a sense would suit the facts very well; and it would not be unprecedented. The dark lady would thus be passed over as subordinate.

CHAPTER III.

SOME CHRONOLOGICAL INDICATIONS.

§ 1. *The Passionate Pilgrim.*—In the year 1599, William Jaggard published *The Passionate Pilgrim*, a collection of poetical pieces by different hands, but bearing on its title the name of Shakespeare. Occupying the first two places in this book are two Sonnets which differ only in some subordinate details from those numbered 138 and 144 in the first edition of "Shakespeare's Sonnets," published ten years later. The second of these Sonnets, 144, is especially important with regard to the chronology. The poet declares that he has "two loves," the one "a woman colour'd ill," and the other "a man right fair:"—

> "Two Loues I haue, of Comfort, and Despaire,
> That like two Spirits, do suggest me still:
> My better Angell is a man (right faire),
> My worser Spirite a Woman (colour'd ill)."

The "man right fair" is thus spoken of not only as an "angel," but as a "better angel." There is thus a reasonable implication that he was not only endowed with pre-eminent beauty, but distinguished also by amiability and goodness. These facts, and especially the incidents alluded to (144, lines 5 to 8), the formation of an intimacy between the dark lady, the "woman colour'd ill," and the beautiful youth, the "man right fair," together with the woman being the wooer, correspond with what is to be found in the first series of Sonnets:—

> "Take all my loves, my love, yea, take them all," &c. (40).

"And when a woman woos what woman's son
Will sourly leave her till she (Q. he) have prevail'd?" &c. (41).

Compare

"Wooing his purity with her foul (faire, *Pass. Pilg.*) pride" (144, line 8).

Taking this correspondence into account, there seems to be no reasonable doubt that the friendship between Shakespeare and his beautiful young friend had already existed for a longer or shorter time, when, in 1599, the *Passionate Pilgrim* made its appearance. There is no reason, however, for supposing that the friendship was already of old date. The publisher, Jaggard, seems to have been anxious, not unnaturally perhaps, to print new poems in his volume. He was indebted to Barnfield's *Poems in Divers Humors*, published in 1598, and to Shakespeare's *Love's Labour's Lost*, of the same year. How Jaggard got hold of Shakespeare's two Sonnets 138 and 144, we do not know. But the fact presents no difficulty, since poems in MS. were pretty freely copied, and so passed from one hand to another. And this may very well have occurred soon after the first composition of the Sonnets in question. But had the friendship between Shakespeare and his youthful male friend been of long standing when the intimacy was formed between the dark lady and this same beautiful youth, of whom we may now speak, in accordance with what has been said (Chapter II.), as "Mr. W. H."? Some answer to this question is given by Sonnet 33, which relates to this incident, or rather to its effect on the friendship between Shakespeare and Mr. W. H. We have in this Sonnet (taking into account also 34 and 35, which are closely connected) pretty clear evidence that, when the incident in question occurred, the friendship had been very brief—so brief, indeed, that its duration could be spoken of as "one hour:"—

"But out, alack! he was but *one hour* mine,
The region cloud hath mask'd him from me now."

Quotation has been already made from this Sonnet on account of its great poetical beauty (p. 8), describing, as it does, the sun which, though glorious in its rising at *early morn*, becomes very soon concealed from view by dense clouds. Such had been the poet's friendship with Mr. W. H. Taking this into account, together with the statement "he was but one hour mine," it must be concluded that the friendship had existed but a short time: quite possibly it may not have been formed many months before the *Passionate Pilgrim* was published.

§ 2. *Meres's "Palladis Tamia, Wit's Treasury."*—In the year preceding the publication of the *Passionate Pilgrim*, Francis Meres published his *Palladis Tamia, Wit's Treasury*. The book was registered on September 7, 1598. In this work the author mentions, and highly eulogises, various contemporary poets. Meres, who was not improbably a personal friend of Shakespeare, makes express mention not only of several of Shakespeare's other works, but alludes also to his "sugred Sonnets among his priuate friends." Are these "sugred Sonnets" to be identified with the collection published in 1609, or perhaps with a part of it? It is, of course, possible that Shakespeare may have written Sonnets which were never printed, and which have perished. But I should think it not unlikely, taking into account the date above mentioned, September 1598, that Meres may very well refer to some of the Sonnets in our existing collection.[1] There is, however, in relation to Meres's book, another fact of great importance, namely, that there exist strong grounds for believing that Shakespeare wrote his 55th Sonnet after he had seen Meres's book. There is in Meres the

[1] In coming to a conclusion on this question, it is important to observe, with reference to the period of the year 1598, when Meres made his allusion to the "sugred Sonnets," that he mentions Chapman's "inchoate Homer." Chapman *had published in* 1598 *seven books of his translation of the Iliad.* Moreover, it is not unimportant that the section on poets is *towards the end* of Meres's book.

following remarkable passage, partly in English, and partly in Latin :—

"As Ouid saith of his worke,—

Jamque opus exegi, quod nec Jouis ira, nec ignis,
Nec poterit ferrum, nec edax abolere vetustas ;

And as Horace saith of his,—

Exegi monumentum aere perennius,
Regalique situ pyramidum altius,
Quod non imber edax, non Aquilo impotens
Possit diruere aut innumerabilis
Annorum series et fuga temporum ;

So say I severally of Sir Philip Sidneys, Spencers, Daniels, Draytons, Shakespeares, and Warners workes—

Non Iouis ira, imbres, Mars, ferrum, flamma, senectus,
Hoc opus unda, lues, turbo, venena ruent.

Et quanquam ad pulcherrimum hoc opus euertendum tres illi Dii conspirabunt, Cronus, Vulcanus, et pater ipse gentis :—

Non tamen annorum series, non flamma, nec ensis,
Æternum potuit hoc abolere dieus."—Fol. 282.

Meres, it will be observed, quotes both from Ovid and Horace, giving also an appendix of his own, partly in English and partly in Latin. Then in his appendix he says, "So say I severally," &c., respectively of the works of each of the poets named, that "not the anger of Jupiter, storms, Mars, the sword, flame, old age, the wave, pestilence, the whirlwind, poison, shall bring this work to ruin." He then adds that, though there should be a conspiracy of the three deities, Cronus, Vulcan, Jupiter, for the purpose of overthrowing the work, it shall be proof against the power of time, of flame, of sword. Let the reader now turn to Shakespeare's 55th Sonnet :—

"Not marble, nor the gilded monuments
Of princes, shall outlive this powerful rhyme,
But you shall shine more bright in these contents
Than unswept stone, besmear'd with sluttish time.

When wasteful war shall statues overturn,
And broils root up the work of masonry,
Nor Mars his sword nor war's quick fire shall burn
The living record of your memory.
'Gainst death and all oblivious enmity
Shall you pace forth; your praise shall still find room,
Even in the eyes of all posterity
That wear this world out to the ending doom.
So till the judgment that yourself arise,
You live in this, and dwell in lovers' eyes."

Malone compared the commencement of Horace's ode, "Exegi monumentum," &c., apparently not remembering the quotation of this ode by Meres. The resemblance of Shakespeare's Sonnet to Horace's ode is manifest, not only in the thought, but also to some extent in the language. Now, though evidence is wanting that Shakespeare possessed much, if any, acquaintance with Horace generally, yet we need have no difficulty in believing that, after Meres's book had been published, Shakespeare's attention would be specially directed to the ode in question (iii. 30), or rather to that portion of it which Meres had quoted. It may be regarded, indeed, as certain that the award of immortality to himself and other distinguished poets would attract, more or less, the notice of Shakespeare. Very likely he received a presentation copy of *Wit's Treasury*. But whether this was the case or not, it is unlikely that he would long remain ignorant of the compliment which had been paid to him. And as evidence that he did in fact become acquainted with Meres's book, it is very noteworthy that there are some things in the 55th Sonnet which find their analogies, not in the passage from Horace, but in Meres's quotation from Ovid, and particularly in the Latin of Meres's appendix. It is Ovid, and not Horace, who speaks of the destructive agencies of fire and sword, "nec ignis, nec poterit ferrum." But the seventh line of the Sonnet—

"Nor Mars his sword nor war's quick fire shall burn,"

finds its closest analogy in Meres's "Non . . . Mars, ferrum, flamma" ("not . . . Mars, the sword, flame"). So close, indeed, is the resemblance, that it is scarcely possible to avoid the conclusion that Meres's Latin suggested the line in the Sonnet. This conclusion is strengthened by the incongruity which manifests itself in the line, the verb "shall burn" suiting only "war's quick fire," and not the preceding "Mars his sword." It will be seen upon reflection that this incongruity is easily accounted for if the words "Mars," "sword," "fire," or the ideas they represent, were borrowed all together from Meres. The elements composing this line are not to be found in combination elsewhere in Shakespeare, nor is the sword of Mars elsewhere mentioned. Then the expression of the ninth line, "all oblivious enmity,"[1] finds its explanation in the numerous influences tending to produce oblivion mentioned by Meres, though perhaps the word "enmity" has especially in view Meres's supposition of a hostile conspiracy on the part of the three deities. Lastly, what Shakespeare says of "overturning statues" and of "broils rooting out the work of masonry," may very well have been suggested by Meres's "ad pulcherrimum hoc opus evertendum," though this perhaps is not quite so conclusive. On the whole, however, that the 55th Sonnet was suggested by the passage from Meres seems scarcely open to question. It may be reasonably inferred, therefore, that Sonnet 55 was written after the registration of Meres's book in September 1598.[2] So far as the evidence just given is concerned, the Sonnet may have been written just about this date, or a good while subsequently. But in the next Sonnet (56), which probably followed after no very long interval, we find the words "too contracted *new*," relating apparently to the poet and his

[1] So Q. not "all-oblivious enmity," as the expression has been incorrectly given.

[2] This was first suggested by me in the *Athenæum*, September 11, 1880.

friend. These words may be compared with those previously given from Sonnet 33, "thou wert but *one hour* mine." We must conclude, therefore, that when the 55th Sonnet was written, the friendship between Shakespeare and Mr. W. H. was still a *new* friendship. Taking into account what was said before with respect to the *Passionate Pilgrim*, it may appear not unlikely that Sonnet 55 was written early in 1599, or late in the previous year. Perhaps the former date (1599), beginning the year, as we now do, with January, would be preferable.

§ 3. *Historical Allusions.*—It has been mentioned above (p. 5) that Sonnets 100 to 126 form probably a single connected poem. In three of these Sonnets, 104, 107, 124, there are chronological indications of very great importance. Let us take first 107 :—

> "Not mine own fears, nor the prophetic soul
> Of the wide world dreaming on things to come,
> Can yet the lease of my true love control,
> Suppos'd as forfeit to a confin'd doom.
> The mortal moon hath her eclipse endur'd,
> And the sad augurs mock their own presage ;
> Incertainties now crown themselves assur'd,
> And peace proclaims olives of endless age.
> Now with the drops of this most balmy time
> My love looks fresh, and death to me subscribes,
> Since spite of him I'll live in this poor rhyme,
> While he insults o'er dull and speechless tribes.
> And thou in this shalt find thy monument,
> When tyrants' crests and tombs of brass are spent."

Mr. Gerald Massey[1] maintained that, in what is said in the fifth line concerning the eclipse of "the mortal moon," there is an allusion to the death of Queen Elizabeth, and that thus the date of the Sonnet is 1603. This view cannot be regarded as correct, though it may be readily conceded that "the mortal moon" is in all probability a poetical designation of the Queen. She was, according to Eliza-

[1] *The Secret Drama of Shakespeare's Sonnets*, 2nd edit., p. 312.

bethan poets, Cynthia, goddess of the shining orb.[1] But to suppose an allusion to her death seems altogether out of harmony with the drift and scope of the Sonnet. Notwithstanding fears and forebodings, the poet's love for his friend shall *not* be "forfeit to a confin'd doom," but shall ever *endure*. In the fifth line the emphasis is obviously on the word "endur'd":—

"The mortal moon hath her eclipse *endur'd*."

As Dowden justly observes, "In the present Sonnet the moon is imagined as having endured her eclipse, and come out none the less bright." The possibility of a reference to Elizabeth's death is thus precluded.

There occurred, however, not far from the close of Elizabeth's life and reign, an event which, it is not difficult to see, might be spoken of as a threatening eclipse, and from which the Queen might be represented as having come forth with her glory undimmed. That event was the rebellion of Essex. Moreover, with regard to this event we may go beyond the supposition that it *might* be so spoken of. Within a week of the abortive attempt of Essex to call out the citizens of London, Secretary Cecil, according to a document in the Record Office, delivered himself to the following effect:—"As the declining of the Sun bringes generall

[1] A very good example, to which my attention was directed by the Rev. W. A. Harrison, is furnished by the ode "Of Cynthia," which stands last in Francis Davison's *Poetical Rapsody* (1602). The concluding stanza is—

"Times yong houres attend her still,
And her eyes and cheeks do fill,
With fresh youth and beautie.
All her louers olde do grow,
But their hartes they do not so
In their Loue and duty."

Then follows the note,—"This Song was sung before her sacred Maiestie at a show on horsebacke wherewith the right Honorable the Earle of Cumberland presented her Highnesse on Maie day last." The apparent date should be noted.

darkness, so her Maiesties hurt is our continuall night; and although the one by course of Nature may be renewed, yet the other will hardly be matched in any future age; how odious then ought they to be in the eye of all good subiects that haue sought the vtter ruine of so blessed a soueraine."[1]

"The sad augurs mock their own presage" is a description which, we may well believe, would, after the affair of Sunday February 8, 1601, aptly describe the feelings of those who had predicted the success of Essex. And then in the lines—

> "Incertainties now crown themselves assur'd,
> And peace proclaims olives of endless age,"

we may find, with probability, an allusion to the embassy sent by James, the Scotch king, to congratulate the Queen on putting down the rebellion. The "incertainties" may refer to the previously doubtful attitude of James. If the attempt of Essex had been so far successful as to stir up a civil war, it is not at all unlikely that James would have given active assistance to the rebels. Now, however, this uncertainty was removed. And now, instead of hostilities, terms of "inviolable unity and concord" had been ratified between the two monarchs.[2] Further, the words of the ninth line, "the drops of this most balmy time," contain, as seems likely, an allusion to the season of the year when the Sonnet was written, probably the spring or

[1] *State Papers, Domestic, Elizabeth*, cclxxviii. What Shakespeare says about the "eclipse of the mortal moon" may be advantageously compared also with the following extract from a letter of Bacon's written to the Queen prior to the rebellion:—"The devices of some that would put out all your Majesty's lights, and fall on reckoning how many years you have reigned, which I beseech our blessed Saviour may be doubled, and that I may never live to see any eclipse of your glory" (Spedding's *Bacon*, vol. ix. p. 160). There can thus be no doubt that the language of the Sonnet would be entirely in accordance with the usage of the time.

[2] Camden, *Life and Reign of Queen Elizabeth*, vol. ii. p. 338.

early summer of 1601.[1] At this time the interval since the rebellion would not have been great, and therefore the probability of allusions such as those suggested would be increased.

In Sonnet 124 we may find other allusions entirely in accordance with those already reviewed. The poet declares that his love for his friend is not "the child of state"—an expression on which by itself not very much could be based, but which, taken with the context, is at least consistent with the supposition that the poet was thinking of Essex and the dignities he attained—a supposition suitable also to what is said of "Time's love" and "Time's hate." In the latter part of the Sonnet Shakespeare seems to conceive of his love for his friend Mr. W. H. as standing alone, self-contained, and complete, like a huge pyramid :—

> "If my dear love were but the child of state,
> It might for Fortune's bastard be unfather'd,
> As subject to Time's love or to Time's hate,
> Weeds among weeds, or flowers with flowers gather'd.
> No, it was builded far from accident;
> It suffers not in smiling pomp, nor falls
> Under the blow of thralled discontent,
> Whereto th' inviting time our fashion calls:
> It fears not policy, that heretick,
> Which works on leases of short-number'd hours,
> But all alone stands hugely politick,
> That it nor grows with heat, nor drowns with showers.
> To this I witness call the fools of Time,
> Which die for goodness, who have liv'd for crime."

When the seventh and eighth line speak of—

> "thralled discontent,
> Whereto th' inviting time our fashion calls,"

there is obviously an allusion to contemporary circumstances. The expression "thralled discontent" seems to suit perfectly the state of things after the rebellion, if we take the

[1] These indications of time in Shakespeare may be compared with the indications of time and season in Spenser's Sonnets, 4, 19, &c.

word "thralled" as referring to the severe measures by which the rebellion had been put down, and by which discontent was still restrained. The disturbed state of feeling found, however, conspicuous expression in the turbulent Parliament which assembled in the autumn of 1601, and which was the last in the reign. But the most important allusions in the Sonnet are to be found in those remarkable expressions of the thirteenth and fourteenth lines, which speak of "the fools of Time" as "living for crime" and "dying for goodness." Difficult as these expressions may seem at first sight, they become intelligible when considered as referring to Essex and his companions, and to the consequences of the rebellion. The "fools of Time" are those whom Time does what he pleases with, now raising them to the highest dignities, and now bringing them down to the scaffold. Similarly we have in 116 "Love's not Time's fool," expressing, as the context clearly shows, the idea of unswerving constancy which Time cannot affect or change.[1] The conspiracy and rebellion are evidently alluded to in the "living for crime," while in the "dying for goodness" we may recognise with equal facility an ironical allusion to the popular regard for Essex, after his execution, as the "good earl." And the line—

"That it nor grows with heat nor drowns with showers,"

is, "like this most balmy time" of 107, entirely in accordance with the supposition that the Sonnet was composed in the spring or early summer of 1601.

[1] Comp. also *Measure for Measure*, Act III. sc. 1, lines 11–13:—

"Merely thou art Death's fool,
For him thou labour'st by thy flight to shun,
And yet runn'st toward him still."

Death has it all his own way, and may be imagined to be merely amused by abortive efforts to escape. *Romeo and Juliet*, Act III. sc. 1, line 141, may be also compared,—"O! I am Fortune's fool."

§ 4. *The Three Years' Space.*—We are now in a position to consider the important notice of time in Sonnet 104:—

> "Three winters' cold
> Have from the forests shook three summers' pride,
> Three beauteous springs to yellow autumn turn'd
> In process of the seasons have I seen,
> Three April perfumes in three hot Junes burn'd,
> Since first I saw you fresh, which yet are green."

In accordance with what has been said previously, Sonnets 100 to 126 constitute in all probability a single poem, or a connected series written about the same time. We have just seen pretty conclusive reason to assign some of the Sonnets in this series to 1601, and even to the early summer or spring of that year. Accordingly, Sonnet 104 just quoted, which indicates that three years' space had elapsed since the commencement of Shakespeare's acquaintance with Mr. W. H., must be regarded as having the same date. Reckoning back from the spring of 1601, we shall come to the spring of 1598. And the reader should not fail to notice the prominence given to the vernal season in the quotation just given. "Three beauteous springs" had been changed to "yellow autumn," and "three April perfumes" burned in "three hot Junes." These indications bring us to the conclusion that the acquaintance commenced not later than the April of 1598. Such a date would allow a sufficient time to intervene before the publication of the *Passionate Pilgrim* in 1599, and would be consistent with the friendship being still spoken of as "new" when Sonnets 55 and 56 were written, if, as mentioned above (p. 22), we place their composition late in 1598 or early in 1599.

The conclusions we have thus attained are independent of the identification of Mr. W. H. with any particular person known to history. They will be found, however, of great importance with respect to this identification (Chap. VII.), as also with regard to some other questions which will be discussed in Chapters IV.–VI.

CHAPTER IV.

SHAKESPEARE AND SOUTHAMPTON.

The suggestion has been made that Shakespeare's friend in the Sonnets, Mr. W. H., was the Earl of Southampton, the patron to whom the poet had dedicated his *Venus and Adonis* and *Lucrece*.[1] But the difficulties which stand in the way of our accepting this suggestion are altogether insuperable. It is scarcely to be doubted that the W. of W. H. represents William. The evidence of the punning Sonnets, 135, 136, 143, is not easily to be set aside: the "Will" of these Sonnets is too emphatic. Southampton's name, however, was not William, but Henry. If, however, we could pass by this not inconsiderable difficulty, and could go so far as to suppose that, for the purpose of disguise, the order of the initials was inverted, and that W. H. really represents H. W., that is, Henry Wriothesley, Earl of Southampton, still the chronological results we have already attained will compel us altogether to reject the suggestion. Shakespeare's acquaintance with Lord Southampton dates, not from 1598, but at least from 1593, the date of the *Venus and Adonis*, when Southampton was nineteen. Then in 1601, our date for Sonnets 100 to 126, Southampton would be quite past the age when he could be addressed as "lovely boy" (126), or when he would feel complimented by being told that his "sweet self" resembled "cherubins" (114). It would be superfluous, therefore, to attempt to show the inapplicability to Southampton of the

[1] N. Drake, *Shakespeare and his Times*, 1817.

first seventeen Sonnets and of various other particulars, including that personal beauty which Shakespeare so highly extolled. We must conclude, then, that Mr. W. H. was certainly not the Earl of Southampton.

There is, however, in relation to Southampton, another matter which must not be passed over. We have seen strong grounds for believing that the 107th and 124th Sonnets allude to the rebellion of the Earl of Essex, and to the downfall of that nobleman and his companions (p. 24). This downfall Shakespeare seems to have regarded, not with regret, or even indifference, but with something rather of satisfaction. And yet Southampton, to whom he had dedicated his two poems, had been a prominent member of the party of Essex. Southampton, it is true, had not been put to death, but he was in prison, and, in the spring of 1601, the ultimate issue was still uncertain. Are we to charge Shakespeare with ingratitude? There can scarcely be a doubt that the dedication of the *Venus and Adonis* was acknowledged by a present of greater or less value. We cannot speak so confidently with regard to the *Lucrece*. It has been said that the dedication to the *Lucrece* was "written, not in terms of timid appeal, like the earlier dedication, but in words of strong and confident affection."[1] In the dedication to the *Venus and Adonis* Shakespeare had said, "I know not how I shall offend in dedicating my vnpolisht lines to your Lordship;" but he prefaces the *Lucrece* with the declaration, "The loue I dedicate to your Lordship is without end: whereof this Pamphlet without beginning is but a superfluous Moity. The warrant I haue of your Honourable disposition, not the worth of my vntutord Lines makes it assured of acceptance. What I haue done is yours, what I haue to doe is yours; being part in all I haue, deuoted yours. Were my worth greater, my duety would shew greater, meane time, as it is, it is bound to your

[1] Dowden, *Shakespeare Primer*, p. 23.

Lordship; to whom I wish long life still lengthened with all happinesse." It is thus seen that, in the first dedication, Shakespeare had expressed doubt as to the reception he might meet with; in the second he dedicates to Southampton a "love without end." But still there is in the dedication to *Lucrece* language not at all suggestive of a close friendship. If Shakespeare had been on terms of intimacy with his patron, he would hardly have said of his poem, "*The warrant I have of your honourable disposition* . . . makes it assured of acceptance." This is cold indeed as compared with the language addressed to Mr. W. H. in the Sonnets. We may infer, perhaps, that the dedication to *Lucrece* implies on the whole a desire for closer relations. But did Southampton respond to the appeal? We have no evidence that he did. The usual opinion, however, would seem to be that Southampton was pre-eminently *the* friend and patron of Shakespeare. But the editors of the Folio of 1623 can scarcely have taken this view. Southampton was still alive when that volume was issued; but the editors pass him over without mention, and anxious "to keep the memory of so worthy a friend and fellow alive as was our Shakespeare," and "to procure his orphans guardians," they dedicate the book to the brothers, the Earls of Pembroke and Montgomery. This fact is very important, and it not unnaturally suggests a possible rupture or estrangement between the poet and his first patron. Shakespeare's sensitive soul may have been wounded by a real or fancied slight. Perhaps, through inadvertence, he had been kept waiting in an ante-chamber in a manner similar to that which so seriously provoked Dr. Johnson's anger. But whatever may have been the cause, there is reason to believe that, as early as 1601, Shakespeare had become alienated from Southampton.

Now if the view of Sonnet 124 already given (p. 25) is correct, and if, when Shakespeare speaks of those who "have lived for crime" and yet "die for goodness," he

alludes to Essex and his companions, it would not be unlikely that we should find, in close connection, some allusion to Southampton and the relations which he had sustained to Shakespeare. Sonnet 124 we have placed in 1601. At this time Southampton was suffering imprisonment as a convicted rebel. It is, therefore, in the nature of things likely enough that there would be persons very willing to remind Shakespeare of the "love without end" which he had proffered to Southampton in the widely-circulated dedication to *Lucrece*. This would be the more likely if Shakespeare now professed adherence to the Court party and strong aversion to the conspiracy and the conspirators.[1] Such persons would very probably hint that Shakespeare was unfaithful, and that he had not "a true soul." Thus the words "informer" and "a true soul" of the last line but one in Sonnet 125 admit of easy explanation :—

> "Hence, thou suborn'd informer! a true soul,
> When most impeach'd, stands least in thy control."

And what precedes (expressed with Shakespeare's usual love of metaphor) is in complete accordance with that view of Shakespeare's relations to his first patron which I have suggested :—

[1] It must be mentioned here that no relations of friendship, or intimacy of any sort whatever, between Shakespeare and Essex are to be inferred from what is said concerning the latter in the chorus preceding Act v. of *Henry V.* :—

> "As by a lower but by loving likelihood,
> Were now the general of our gracious empress
> (As in good time he may), from Ireland coming,
> Bringing rebellion broached on his sword,
> How many would the peaceful city quit,
> To welcome him? much more, and much more cause,
> Did they this Harry."

The last words are to be noted, as well as the hatred for rebellion which Shakespeare expresses. And if Essex himself turned rebel, it is not difficult to surmise the fate which Shakespeare would desire for him.

> "Were't aught to me I bore the canopy,
> With my extern the outward honouring,
> Or laid great bases for eternity,
> Which proves more short than waste or ruining."

On a careful consideration of the context it may be seen that Shakespeare thus implicitly denies that he had been unfaithful. He had never been on terms of close intimacy with Essex or Southampton. He had merely "borne the canopy," as in a public pageant, "honouring the outward with his extern." And the same thing also is implied in the lines which follow, and which speak of the mere "gazing" of the "dwellers on form and favour." Moreover, bearing in mind the dedication to the *Lucrece*, with its "love without end," we need have no difficulty in understanding what is meant by the "eternity which *proves* more short than waste or ruining." In 1601 but seven years had elapsed since that dedication was published. Editors have been wont to alter in the Sonnet "proves" into "prove." But the singular "proves," as given in the First Quarto, is certainly correct. This becomes clear when we see the meaning. Shakespeare had not expected that a breach between Southampton and himself would ever occur, but the event had shown how erroneous was his anticipation. The "love without end" had *proved* of briefer duration than even seven years. As to the plural "great bases," there is very probably an allusion to the two poems dedicated to Southampton.[1]

[1] It is not by any means denied that, with an antecedent plural noun, Shakespeare employs after the relative a verb ending in *s*, as also after a plural nominative, though in these cases editors have not uncommonly altered the verb (see Abbott, *Shakesp. Gram.*, §§ 247, 333). In Sonnet 125 the verb has evidently been changed to bring it into apparent agreement with "great bases." But, apart from grammatical considerations, we can scarcely regard Shakespeare as intending that he had laid "great bases," which bases, however, had proved *too short, shorter than "waste or ruining."*

CHAPTER V.

THE RIVAL POET.

It may be convenient to consider here, also, as connected with the chronology, the question relating to the rival poet of 86 and preceding Sonnets. It is needless to discuss the claims of Marlowe, Drayton, and Daniel, with respect to neither of whom has any probable case been presented. To Professor Minto (*Characteristics of English Poets*, 2nd edit., p. 221 *seq.*) is due the identification of the rival poet of the Sonnets with George Chapman, an identification so complete as to leave no reasonable doubt on the matter. This identification will be found also to agree entirely with the chronological results which we have already attained. Professor Minto justly contends that the 86th Sonnet gives ample materials for determining the question:—

> "Was it the proud full sail of his great verse,
> Bound for the prize of all-too-precious you,
> That did my ripe thoughts in my brain inhearse,
> Making their tomb the womb wherein they grew?
> Was it his spirit, by spirits taught to write
> Above a mortal pitch, that struck me dead?
> No, neither he, nor his compeers by night,
> Giving him aid, my verse astonished.
> He, nor that affable familiar ghost
> Which nightly gulls him with intelligence,
> As victors, of my silence cannot boast;
> I was not sick of any fear from thence:
> But when your countenance fil'd up his line,
> Then lack'd I matter; that enfeebled mine."

"Chapman," says Professor Minto, "was a man of overpowering enthusiasm, ever eager in magnifying poetry, and

advancing fervent claims to supernatural inspiration. In 1594 he published a poem called *The Shadow of Night*, which goes far to establish his identity with Shakespeare's rival. In the Dedication, after animadverting severely on vulgar searchers after knowledge, he exclaims, 'Now what a supererogation in wit this is, to think Skill so mightily pierced with their loves that she should prostitutely show them her secrets, when she will scarce be looked upon by others *but with invocation, fasting, watching, yea, not without having drops of their souls like a heavenly familiar.*'" With the last words of this quotation should be compared Shakespeare's line,—

> "He, nor that affable familiar ghost."

As to what is said, in the Sonnet, of the "compeers by night" and the being "nightly gulled with intelligence," these expressions are clearly connected with Chapman's consecration of himself to Night:—

> "To thy blacke shades and desolation
> I consecrate my life;"

and with his invitation to his "compeers:"—

> "All you possesst with indepressed spirits,
> Indu'd with nimble and aspiring wits,
> Come consecrate with me to sacred Night
> Your whole endeavours and detest the light:"

> "No pen can anything eternall wright
> That is not steept in humor of the Night."

Then as to "the proud full sail of his great verse," of which the first line of Sonnet 86 speaks, the language used suits entirely the grand fourteen-syllable metre in which Chapman wrote his translation of the Iliad. The date when Chapman first published seven books of the Iliad, 1598, is especially noteworthy. The Sonnets 100 to 126 we have placed in 1601. From the commencement of 100,—

> "Where art thou, Muse, that thou forget'st so long," &c.,

taken together with the lines of 102,—

> "Our love was new, and then but in the spring,
> When I was wont to greet it with my lays,
> As Philomel in summer's front doth sing,
> And stops his pipe in growth of riper days,"

it seems probable that when 100 *seq.* were written a considerable interval had elapsed since the composition of the larger number of the Sonnets 1 to 99. Thus it would be more likely that 78 and 86 were written in 1598 or 1599 than in 1600. The latter date would seem scarcely to leave a sufficient interval for the "so long" of 100. Supposing, then, that the Sonnets referring to the rival poet were written in 1599, Chapman's "Seaven Iliades" would have been at the time a new book, and so would be likely to attract the notice of Mr. W. H., and excite his interest in Chapman. Shakespeare's apprehensions, therefore, can scarcely be regarded as altogether unreasonable, especially if we remember the effect which a first acquaintance with Chapman's Homer produced on a great poet more than two hundred years afterwards. I allude, of course, to Keats, who tells us that on "hearing Chapman speak out loud and bold,"—

> "Then felt I like some watcher of the skies
> When a new planet swims into his ken;
> Or like stout Cortez when, with eagle eyes,
> He stared at the Pacific—and all his men
> Looked at each other with a wild surmise,
> Silent, upon a peak in Darien."

CHAPTER VI.

TWO OTHER CONTEMPORARY POETS.

§ 1. *Marston's "In Praise of his Pygmalion."*—In his 32nd Sonnet Shakespeare says that if, after his death, his friend should chance to "re-survey" his "poor rude lines;" when compared with "the bettering of the time," they may seem "outstripp'd by every pen." The product of Shakespeare's muse, "exceeded by the height of happier men," may be left far behind. But Shakespeare has still one request to make:—

> "O, then vouchsafe me but this loving thought:
> 'Had my friend's muse grown with this growing age,
> A dearer birth than this his love had brought,
> *To march in ranks of better equipage:*
> But since he died, and poets better prove,
> Theirs for their style I'll read, his for his love.'"

Professor Dowden, in commenting on this Sonnet, suggests whether Shakespeare might not have "had a sense of the progress of poetry in the time of Elizabeth." There is reason, however, to recognise an allusion more special than Professor Dowden suggests. Moreover, this special allusion not only enables us to account for what Shakespeare says as to "the bettering of the time;" it is also entirely in accordance with, and confirmatory of, the chronology of the Sonnets already set forth. The metaphor in the line I have italicised is drawn pretty obviously from the march of successive ranks of soldiers in military equipment. There appears, however, some incongruity when this line is compared with that preceding. The "bringing a dearer birth"

to march in better equipped ranks can scarcely seem altogether suitable. There is here a remarkable combination of metaphors. But some facts in relation to a work of Marston's furnish a pretty complete explanation.

In 1598 Marston published anonymously his *Metamorphosis of Pigmalion's Image and Certaine Satyres.* Marston seems to have thought that *Pigmalion's Image* and the *Satyres* needed a connecting or harmonising link, lest he should seem to change his "hew like a camelion." He, therefore, interposed some lines said to be "in praise of his Pigmalion," but looking back to some extent to the one poem, and forward to the others. In this interposed poem Marston speaks of his—

> "Stanzaes like odd bands
> Of voluntaries and mercenarians:
> Which like soldados of our warlike age,
> *March rich bedight in warlike equipage:*
> Glittering in daubed lac'd accoustrements,
> And pleasing sutes of loues habiliments."

There is no great difficulty in perceiving that we have here in all probability the source of Shakespeare's line, "To march in ranks of better equipage." The analogy is too close to be easily explained away. But, it may be said, is it not possible that Marston borrowed from Shakespeare? To this question the answer must be given, that the congruity which, as already observed, is absent in Shakespeare, is clearly seen in Marston. It is entirely suitable that "soldados" or soldiers should "march" richly bedecked with military accoutrements. It may be maintained, therefore, with confidence, that Marston's poem preceded Shakespeare's. Then, as to what Shakespeare says of "the bettering of the time," and of his being in the future "outstripp'd by every pen," it should be observed that, in accordance with the view of Dr. Grosart (*Introduction to Marston's Poems*, p. xxvi.), the *Pigmalion* owed its origin to Shakespeare's successful *Venus and Adonis.* It need not

be for a moment supposed that Shakespeare really thought Marston's poem superior to his own; but it is likely enough that there were those who, for reasons of their own, would give it the preference, and would proclaim the advent of a new poet whose "first bloomes of his poesie" showed that he was destined to surpass Shakespeare and the rest. As Dr. Grosart points out, Marston's book seems to have gained immediate popularity. He adduces as evidence the fact that while the *Pigmalion* was entered in the Stationers' Register on May 27, 1598, so soon after as September 8, is found the entry of Marston's *Scourge of Vilany*. Possibly, too, Shakespeare's friend, caught by the general popularity, had been eulogising the new poem as of very high promise. On this view the language of the 32nd Sonnet presents no difficulty, while the agreement with the chronology supported by other evidence is complete. According to this chronology, Sonnet 32 would be written in 1598, probably during the summer, when Marston's poem was at the full height of its popularity.

§ 2. *Drayton's "Idea."*—With regard to the chronological question, the relations with Shakespeare of another contemporary poet are also of some importance, and therefore they may be suitably referred to here. In 1594 Michael Drayton published a small volume of Sonnets with the title *Ideas Mirrour*. In these poems he is alleged to have celebrated an early attachment to a lady who lived by the river Ankor or Anker, in North Warwickshire, and whom he designated by the poetical name of "Idea:"—

> "*Ardens* sweet *Ankor*, let thy glory be
> That fayre *Idea* she doth liue by thee" (*Amour* 24).

This collection of Sonnets, which, in successive editions, underwent very considerable alterations, cannot be said to present in its original form any strong resemblances to Shakespeare's work. Taken altogether, these fifty-one Sonnets must be characterised as un-Shakespearian. But in

1599 Drayton published another edition entitled *Idea;* and to this edition he appended his *England's Heroicall Epistles.*[1] The number of Sonnets was increased to fifty-nine, and there are several which, on account of resemblances in language or thought, will readily arrest the attention of a reader familiar with Shakespeare's Sonnets. In order to form a just conclusion as to whether these resemblances were caused by Drayton's having read some of Shakespeare's Sonnets, it is important to bear in mind not only the fact of the change, to which I have adverted, but also the time at which it occurred. There is an instance of similarity to which more than once attention has been directed. In the 1599 edition of Drayton's *Idea*, the number of the Sonnet alluded to is 22 (subsequently 20):—

> "An euill spirit your beauty haunts me still,
> Wherewith (alas) I haue been long possest,
> Which ceaseth not to tempt me vnto ill,
> Nor gives me once but one pore minutes rest.
> In me it speakes, whether I sleepe or wake,
> And when by meanes to driue it out I try,
> With greater torments then it me doth take,
> And tortures me in most extreamity.
> Before my face it layes all my dispaires,
> And hastes me on vnto a suddaine death;
> Now tempting me, to drowne my selfe in teares,
> And then in sighing to giue vp my breath:
> Thus am I still prouok'd to euery euill
> By this good wicked spirit, sweet Angel deuill."

A comparison of this Sonnet with Shakespeare's Sonnet 144 can scarcely make it other than probable that the resemblance is not accidental. But as Sonnet 144 was contained in the *Passionate Pilgrim* (1599), it might seem possible that Drayton had seen it in this collection, and that he imitated it later in the same year in the Sonnet given above. We should not, therefore, have made much

[1] I ought perhaps to say that I am not now concerned with Drayton's *Idea, The Shepheards Garland, Fashioned in Nine Eglogs*, 1593.

advance by this comparison with respect to the chronology of the Sonnets. But there are other similarities with regard to which an explanation such as that just given is in no way possible. Take for example lines 7–14 of 33 (as altered in 1599): these must be compared with Shakespeare's 46th and 47th Sonnets, which did not make their appearance in print till 1609.

"*To Imagination.* Sonet 33.

"Whilst yet mine eyes doe surfet with delight
My wofull hart imprison'd in my brest,
Wisheth to be transform'd into my sight,
That it like those in looking might be blest,
But while mine eyes thus greedily doe gaze,
Finding their obiects ouersoone depart,
These now the others happines doe praise,
Wishing themselues that they were now my hart;
That eyes had hart, or that the hart had eyes,
As couetous the others vse to haue;
But finding reason still the same denies,
This to each other mutually they craue,
That since each other yet they cannot bee,
That eyes could thinke, or that my hart could see."

Drayton's Sonnet 29, *To the Senses*, should be compared with Shakespeare's 141. But to quote only one other Sonnet from Drayton (43 in 1599 edition, afterwards 44), in this may be found resemblances to Shakespeare which are very important:—

"Whilst thus my penne striues to eternize thee,
Age rules my lines with wrinckles in my face,
Wherein the Map of all my misery,
Is modeld out the world of my disgrace,
Whilst in dispight of tyrannizing times,
Medea like I make thee young againe,
Proudly thou scorn'st my world outwearing rimes,
And murther'st vertue with thy coy disdaine;
And though in youth, my youth vntimely perrish
To keepe thee from obliuion and the graue,
Ensuing ages yet my rimes shall cherrish
Where I entomb'd my better part shall saue;
And though this earthly body fade and die,
My name shall mount vpon eternitie."

We notice, first, that Drayton, though only some thirty-six years of age, speaks of himself, like Shakespeare, as already aged.[1] Age, with its wrinkles, is ruling lines on his face—a mode of expression easy to be paralleled from Shakespeare (*cf.* 2, 19, 62, 73). Drayton, however, speaks somewhat inconsistently of his youth as "untimely perishing."[2] As to "dispight of tyrannising times" and the person celebrated in his verse being "made young again," 19 (Shaks.) may be compared:—

> "Yet do thy worst, old Time, despite thy wrong,
> My love shall in my verse ever live young."

Like Shakespeare (55 *al.*), Drayton in 1599 anticipates eternal renown; and it is worth noting that, in the previous year (1598) he had been placed among the poets for whom this had been predicted by Meres, Drayton's name standing next before Shakespeare's (p. 19). But perhaps most remarkable of all is what Drayton says of his "better part" being preserved, "entomb'd" in his verse. The reader of Shakespeare may at once recall what is said in 74 of the poet's friend perusing, after Shakespeare's death, the verses which the poet had dedicated to him:—

> "When thou reviewest this, thou dost review
> The very part was consecrate to thee.
> The earth can have but earth, which is his due;
> My spirit is thine, the better part of me;"

and 81,—

> "When you entombed in men's eyes shall lie,
> Your monument shall be my gentle verse
> Which eyes not yet created shall o'er-read."

The evidence is not yet exhausted; but enough has been said to show the probability that, before the issue of his

[1] A fact to which, if I recollect rightly, my attention was directed by Mr. P. Z. Round.

[2] Though the explanation may possibly be given that he felt himself to be "ageing" prematurely.

Idea in 1599, Drayton must have had an acquaintance with some portion of Shakespeare's Sonnets. Such acquaintance is not discernible in the edition of 1594; and, in accordance with what has been previously said, this fact is of great importance in order to our reaching a just conclusion as to whether Drayton was or was not indebted to Shakespeare. As several of Shakespeare's Sonnets which have been mentioned did not appear in print till 1609, it follows that, if Drayton had seen them at all, he must have seen them in manuscript. A circulation in this form is pretty evidently implied in what Meres says of Shakespeare's "sugred Sonnets among his priuate friends;" and we may make a similar inference also from Jaggard's getting hold of two of the Sonnets for his *Passionate Pilgrim*.[1]

But if Drayton was indebted to Shakespeare, a question of some importance suggests itself as to how far this fact is in accordance with chronological conclusions set forth in preceding pages. To this question I may reply that I can detect no allusion to the Sonnets 100 to 126, placed above in 1601. The allusions and analogies are concerned only with those of 1598 and 1599.[2] The latest Sonnet with which we have supposed Drayton to have been acquainted is the 81st; and it is *possible* that this Sonnet may have been written in 1598 (according to the reckoning of the time). But there are apparently no indications which would enable us to determine this point with precision. It is sufficient if we regard Drayton's allusions as being to Sonnets of 1598 or 1599.

How Shakespeare viewed the use made of his work by Drayton we do not know; but it may be supposed not unlikely that he regarded it with magnanimous indifference.

[1] The circulation of works in MS. in Elizabethan times is tolerably well known, but the following example from Newman's Dedication to Sidney's *Astrophel and Stella* (1591) is apposite:—"Where as being spred abroade in written Coppies, it had gathered much corruption by ill Writers."

[2] Of 141, mentioned above, it is impossible to determine the year.

Perhaps this is to be inferred from the fact that the resemblances did not disappear in later editions of the *Idea*. On the contrary, it would rather seem that further suggestion was subsequently derived from the same source; and Drayton, moreover, does not appear to have been deterred from afterwards borrowing in his *Nymphidia* from the description of Queen Mab in *Romeo and Juliet*,[1] and, in his *Barons' Wars*, from the character of Brutus as described by Antony in *Julius Cæsar*.[2] In the latter case this occurred previously to the publication of *Julius Cæsar* in the Folio of 1623. It is, moreover, remarkable and confirmatory of the view just given that already in 1598 Drayton was regarded as a copier or imitator, not to say plagiarist. This appears from the following lines of Edward Guilpin in his *Skialetheia* (Satyre vi. p. 64, Grosart's reprint) :—

> "Drayton's condemned of some for imitation,
> But others say 'twas the best Poets fashion."

There is another fact, also, with regard to Drayton, of no small importance for our chronology. Although, as above stated, *Idea*, with its quasi-Shakespearian insertions, was added to *England's Heroicall Epistles* in 1599, Drayton had in 1598 published an edition of the *Epistles* without *Idea*. We have thus grounds for thinking that Drayton had given his Sonnets their Shakespearian colouring during the interval. And this view is entirely in accordance with the date which has been assigned to the commencement of Shakespeare's Sonnets and to the composition of the earlier portion.

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[1] Chambers's *Cyclopædia of English Literature* (ed. Carruthers), vol. i. p. 91.

[2] Collier's Introduction to *Poems of Drayton*, p. xlviii.

CHAPTER VII.

WILLIAM HERBERT.

The chronological results we have attained place us in a position of advantage for determining the question, Who was "Mr. W. H."? The only answer, of any probability on other grounds, which has been given to this question identifies Mr. W. H. with William Herbert, who became Earl of Pembroke on the death of his father in the January of 1601 (according to our reckoning). To William Herbert, together with his brother Philip, "the most noble and incomparable paire of brethren," was dedicated the First Folio edition of Shakespeare's Plays in 1623, by Shakespeare's friends and fellows, Heminge and Condell. The personal acquaintance with Shakespeare of the noblemen just mentioned is clearly implied when it is said that they had "prosequnted" both the Plays "and their Authour liuing with so much fauour." That "Mr. W. H." should thus be William Herbert is a suggestion lying so ready to hand, that it is almost surprising that no one should seem to have thought of it before the days of Bright (1819) and Boaden (1832).

William Herbert was born on April 8, 1580, and thus he completed his eighteenth year in 1598. It was in the spring of the year just named that, according to Rowland Whyte (*Sidney Papers*, vol. ii. p. 43), William Herbert was to commence residing permanently in London.[1] Here,

[1] "My Lord Harbart hath with much adoe brought his Father to consent that he may liue at London, yet not before the next Springe." And about a week later, April 27, 1597, Whyte again speaks of Herbert's coming to London "next spring," that is, if "Leiden" is a misprint for "London."

however, it must be observed that a fact in Herbert's history of great importance with regard to the Sonnets was discovered in 1884 by the Rev. W. A. Harrison. The fact to which I allude removes pretty completely the difficulty with regard to Shakespeare's urging marriage so strongly on a youth of eighteen (Sonnets 1 to 17). From letters preserved in the Record Office it appears that in 1597 the parents of William Herbert were engaged in negotiations for his marriage to Bridget Vere, daughter of the Earl of Oxford, and granddaughter of the great Lord Burleigh. The year 1597, it will be observed, was the year preceding that in which our chronology places the commencement of the Sonnets. Both the Earl and Countess of Pembroke wrote to Lord Burleigh on August 16, 1597, expressing their satisfaction at the intended match. William Herbert, it would seem, had had an agreeable meeting with the young lady (a damsel of thirteen); and the Countess finds that her son's feelings accord with her own wishes.[1] She hopes the affection is reciprocated. A fortnight later (September 3, 1597), it appears, from a letter of Lord Pembroke's to Burleigh, that two chief difficulties had arisen: first, a doubt as to whether the young lady would be bound by a marriage contracted at so early an age; and, secondly, as to where the young lady should live while William Herbert was travelling as intended.[2] William Herbert is, however, to come

[1] She says, "So far foorth I find my sonns best lykeing affection and resolution to answere my desire heerein as if the late interview have mutually wrought it is suffisient." Her husband, in his letter of the same date (August 16), says, with reference to the matter, "I am not a little glad of that which I heare;" from which it would seem likely that the Countess was the prime mover in the affair.

[2] Lord Pembroke writes from Wilton at the date named: "My good L. My servant Massinger hath delivered unto me yo^re L^ps most kinde letters; and further acquainted me w^th such matters concerning th'intended marriage between myne eldest sonne and the lady Brigett, w^ch it pleased yo^r L^p to impart vnto him. *First, that* yo^re daughter was but thirteen yeares of age at Ester last, & that yo^re L^p therefore rested doubtfull whether

up to town at the beginning of Parliament (Parliament met in October), and to make arrangements. On September 8 the Earl of Oxford, the father of the young lady, expresses his approval of the match, and says that the young gentleman has good parts, and has been well brought up. He thinks that Lord Pembroke, on account of his state of health,

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a marriage would binde her now in like manner as it did my sonne. *Second*, whether shee should in the time of my sonnes trauell remayn w^th^ yo^re^ L^p^ or w^th^ my wife. *Thirdly*, that for perfecting of conueyaunces between vs yo^re^ L^p^ made choice of Justice Owen to ioine w^th^ Baron Ewens whom I had named for my selfe. *Lastly*, that if I would come vp to the parlament, you conceaved this matter might then be concluded with the more conveniency. ffor the first: I haue often heard it from Lawiers, that after a woman hath atteyned twelve yeares of a[ge] shee is by law enabled to consent, & to be bound by marriage, yf t[his] be true (as yo^re^ L^p^ may therin be soon informed) then the marriage w^th^ yo^re^ daughter may lawfully proceed at these her yeares; and shee [therby] shall be no lesse bound then my sonne, yet their continuance together may be differred in respect of their yeares, untill yo^re^ L^p^ shall thinke good. as I willed Massinger heertofore to let you vnderstand that for prevent[ing] of many inconveniences I preferred a marriage before a contract; so I now doe (& still shall) remayne of the same mynde vnless yo^re^ L^p^ shew me reason t[o] the contrary. For the second; I thinke it most convenient (yf yo^re^ L^p^ mislike it not) that after the marriage is solemnized & my sonne gonne to travell, yo^re^ daughter should remayne w^th^ my wife, whose care of h[er] shall answere the nearness whereby she shall then be linked vnto her. For the third; I doe very well like of Justice Owen to be ioyned w^th^ Baron Ewens; & I doubt not but through their good care and travell all thinges shall be concluded to our contentmentes. for the fouerth; such is the present state of my body that I cannot come to this parlament w^th^out extreme perrill to my health, as Massinger can more particularly informe you. And that your L^p^ may know that my presence for this priuat business is not of necessity; I *first* assuer you that I will make a iointure proportionable to that w^ch^ I shall finde yo^re^ L^p^ will geeue in marriage w^th^ yo^re^ daughter. *Secondly*, I seeke not by this match to inrich my selfe or to advaunce myne younger children. for what soever yo^re^ L^p^ will geeue I am contented that the young coople presently haue; yea & for their more honorable maintenance, I will increase the same w^th^ as great an yearly allowance out of myne owne liuing, as (considering myne estate & course of life) I may conueniently spare. *Thirdly*, vpon hearing from yo^re^ L^p^ now by my seruant, I will so instruct & authorize Baron Ew[ens] (whom I have sent for to come vnto me) that myne absence shall be no hinderance to the matter. *Lastly*, my sonne him selfe at the beginning of the parlament

is anxious to see his son suitably married.[1] Why the match was broken off does not appear. Probably William Herbert backed out of it after all. This view accords with what is said in Sonnet 40, line 8, of Mr. W. H.'s "refusing:"—

"By wilful taste of what thyself refusest."

But, whatever view may be taken of this allusion, with the facts just adverted to before us, there can be no difficulty in the exhortations of Sonnets 1 to 17, as addressed to a youth only eighteen years old. And the idea that the Countess, William Herbert's mother, had something to do with these Sonnets being written gains increased credibility

shall come vp both to attend her Ma^tes pleasure for his intended travell (whereunto he shall accordingly prepare him selfe) and also to performe what by yo^re L^p and me shall be agreed upon for his purposed marriage. This is all I can yet write to y^re L^p of this matter; yf ther is anything you further desier to vndersta[nde] I will satisfy you therin. in the meane time, good my L. faill not t[o] procure me licence to be absent from the parlament for that [I] am to returne into Wales to attend her Ma^tes seruice there. [My] proxy I purpose to yo^re L^p; yet yf it please you, you may te[ll] her Ma^ty, I will there conferre it where she shall comaund and so wishing to yo^re L^p and to my selfe, I end. At Wilton the 3 of September 1597. Yo^re L^ps most faithfully assured PEMBROKE."

I have given this letter more fully on account of its special importance with respect to the first seventeen Sonnets; and it is of importance also with regard to other particulars.

[1] Pembroke's letter appears to have reached Burleigh on September 6; it was then transmitted to the Earl of Oxford, who very promptly (September 8) replied. He says, "I do perseyue how bothe my lord and ladie doo perseuer, which dothe greatly content me. . . . My Lord of Pembroke ys a man syklye and therfore yt ys to be gathered he desyrethe in hys lyfte time to se hys sonne bestowed to his lekinge, to compas w^ch my thinkes hys offers very honorable, hys desyres very resonable. Agayne beinge agreable to youre Lordships fatherly care and loue to my daughter. A thinge w^ch for the honor, friendship, and lekinge I haue to the mache very agreable to me so that all partes desyre but the same thynge. I know no reason to delay yt but according to there desyres to accomplishe yt w^th conuenient speede and I do not dout but youre Lordship and my self shall receyue great comfort therby. for the ionge gentelman as I vnderstand hathe been well brought vp, fayre conditioned, and hathe many good partes in hym."

It will thus be seen that the negotiation had proceeded a very long way.

from the correspondence.[1] Whether William Herbert came up to London in the October of 1597, or whether, in accordance with the previous arrangement, he began to reside in town in the spring of 1598, there are apparently no adequate grounds for deciding. It is sufficient for our argument if the spring of 1598 was the time when he first saw Shakespeare. In accordance with what has been already said, he would then be eighteen, an age entirely suitable to his being spoken of as in the "April" of his life (3, line 10), and to such expressions being used concerning him as those which are to be found in the first Sonnet (lines 9 to 12), "the world's *fresh* ornament," "herald to the gaudy *spring*," "thine own *bud*," "*tender* churl." On coming to London, Herbert would no doubt live at Baynard's Castle, south of St. Paul's, and on the bank of the Thames. Now Baynard's Castle was very near indeed to the Blackfriars Theatre, and there is at least a possibility that in some way in connection with this theatre Herbert might have become acquainted with Shakespeare.[2] The intervention of the Countess of Pembroke seems, however, more probable, especially if the allusions in the 3rd Sonnet are considered, allusions agreeing with the well-known personal beauty of the Countess :—

> "Thou art thy mother's glass, and she in thee
> Calls back the lovely April of her prime."

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[1] The late Mr. Grant White, in his Introduction to the Sonnets (*Works of Shakespeare*, vol. i. p. 152, ed. 1865), says of 1 to 17, "There seems to be no imaginable reason for seventeen such poetical petitions. But that a mother should be thus solicitous is not strange, or that she should long to see the beautiful children of her own beautiful offspring. The desire for grandchildren, and the love of them, seem sometimes even stronger than parental yearning. But I hazard this conjecture with little confidence." But the documents in the Record Office, quoted just before, have put a new complexion on this matter.

[2] This would be more probable just at this time than shortly afterwards, when (as it would seem) the Blackfriars Theatre was leased to Evans for the performance of the "Children of the Chapel."

MARY, COUNTESS OF PEMBROKE.

Anxious that her son should marry, and the trouble she had taken in 1597 having been, as we have seen, resultless, she may in consequence have suggested to Shakespeare the writing of the first seventeen Sonnets. That she should extend her patronage to Shakespeare is likely enough. The sister of Sir Philip Sidney, and herself a lady of literary taste, she may well have been an admirer of the great genius now approaching its fullest maturity.[1] Those proclivities which were afterwards to manifest themselves so conspicuously may very possibly have shown themselves while young Herbert was still in the country; and this may account for the difficulty he had in obtaining permission to reside in London. The Countess would probably come to London with her son; but, having regard to the fact that her husband the Earl was suffering from serious disease, it may very well have occurred that he remained in the country, and that Shakespeare was not brought into personal contact with him. In his letter to Lord Burleigh from Wilton, September 3, 1597, he states (*supra*, p. 46) that he should be unable to attend Parliament without extreme danger to his health. Thus, in Shakespeare's being personally unacquainted with Herbert's father some explanation is given of the words of 13, "You had a

[1] Having regard to the relationship of the Countess and her son to Sir Philip Sidney, there is no difficulty in accounting for such allusions to Sidney's *Arcadia* in Sonnets 1–17, as Mr. Gerald Massey has pointed out (*Secret Drama*, &c., 2nd edit., p. 36 *seq.*). Such quotations or allusions would probably be regarded as complimentary. Spenser's lines on this distinguished lady may be given:—

> "They all (quoth he) me gracéd goodly well,
> That all I praise; but in the highest place,
> Urania, sister unto Astrofell,
> In whose brave mind as in a golden coffer,
> All heavenly gifts and riches locked are;
> More rich than pearls of Ind, or gold of Ophir,
> And in her sex more wonderful and rare."
>
> —*Colin Clout's Come Home Again.*

father;" and it certainly becomes more easy to understand that these words do not imply, as some have thought, that the father of the person addressed was dead. This sense would be here tame and out of place. It is safe to assert that the words in question must be interpreted in accordance with the drift and scope of these first Sonnets. The person addressed is exhorted to do as his father did, namely, beget a son :—

"Dear my love, you know
You had a father; let your son say so."

And it may be seen on reflection that, with reference to the sense intended, it would have been less suitable for Shakespeare to write, "You *have* a father; let your son say so." We are not left, however, to follow merely an inference of this kind. Shakespeare has used elsewhere (*Merry Wives*, Act iii. sc. 4, line 36) a strictly analogous expression, "She's coming; to her, coz: O boy, *thou hadst a father*."[1] Shallow thus urges Slender to woo Anne Page in manly fashion. Slender, however, misunderstands the meaning, and in consequence makes himself ridiculous:— "I had a father, Mistress Anne; my uncle can tell you good jests of him," &c. But, in misunderstanding the words in question, he gives them precisely the sense some have contended for in the Sonnet. In both cases, however, the intention is to exhort to manly conduct, though with an obvious difference of detail.

There appear to be no letters of Rowland Whyte's to tell us what William Herbert was doing in the year 1598.[2] According to our chronology, however, it was in all pro-

[1] For this important parallel I am indebted to the Rev. W. A. Harrison.

[2] According to a letter of Tobie Matthew's of September 15, 1598, there was then some talk of a contemplated marriage between William Herbert and Lady Hatton, who must have been considerably older than he. With regard to this Mr. Harrison remarks, "As this is *London* news, William Herbert was presumably there at that time." The letter is in the Record Office.

bability during this year that he was concerned in the affair to which the 40th and other Sonnets relate. Herbert's part therein is quite in accordance with the picture drawn of him by Lord Clarendon in his *History of the Rebellion* (Book i. § 123):—"He was immoderately given up to women. But therein he retained such a power and jurisdiction over his very appetite, that he was not so much transported with beauty and outward allurements, as with those advantages of the mind as manifested an extraordinary wit, and spirit, and knowledge, and administered great pleasure in the conversation. To these he sacrificed himself, his precious time, and much of his fortune." What is here said refers, no doubt, wholly or chiefly to Herbert's more mature years, but his being fascinated in the fair sex by other endowments rather than personal attractions would accord completely with his becoming enamoured of Shakespeare's dark mistress (127 *seq.*), if what Shakespeare himself says concerning this lady is to be regarded. Shakespeare forgave the offence, but the Sonnets relating thereto, and especially the commencement of 41 ("Those pretty wrongs that liberty commits," &c.), convey a somewhat unpleasant impression. One would rather have seen more of indignation, and somewhat less of obsequious compliance. Still in this matter the character of the lady, as depicted in 137 and elsewhere, would naturally have no small influence.

Whyte's letters in 1599 give several notices of Herbert. In August there would seem to have been an intention, whether afterwards fulfilled or not, that Herbert should be placed at the head of two hundred horsemen, "to attend her Majesties person." And at this time, with the view, it would seem, of qualifying himself for his new duties, he was "swagering y^{t} among the Men of Warre, and viewing the Maner of the Musters." During the next month, September, his father, the Earl of Pembroke, became dangerously ill, and Herbert went down to him from

town with all speed. Whyte says that Herbert, after his departure, was "much blamed for his cold and weake Maner of pursuing her Majesties fauour, having had soe good steps to lead him unto it. There is want of Spirit and Courage laid to his charge, and that he is a melancholy young man." Whyte seems to have thought that Herbert might prove unfit for a courtier, and in consequence might have to go back to the country. Whether Herbert's alleged melancholy proceeded from his mind being preoccupied with other matters, and what those matters were, it would be perhaps rash to conjecture. It may be of some importance, however, to observe that, in the same letter in which Whyte speaks of Herbert's uncourtier-like melancholy, he also divulges a plan he had formed for bringing about a marriage between Herbert and the niece of the Lord Admiral.

Herbert's father soon became, for a time at least, convalescent. A surgeon, no doubt celebrated at the time, had gone down from London by the Queen's order or permission, and an operation was successfully performed. At this time (September 19, 1599), in a letter to the Queen, preserved in the Record Office, Herbert's father speaks of his son in terms which tend to show that too much weight should not be given to the rumours about Herbert's melancholy and coldness of manner, although the rumours may have been not without some grounds. The Earl is exceedingly comforted by the Queen's gracious opinion of his son, which in Her Majesty's letters to him not long since she had expressed, and with his son's joyful acknowledgments of the Queen's favour. On October 6 Whyte records that Herbert "is at Court and much bound to her Majestie for her gracious Fauor." Again, on November 24, "My Lord Harbert is exceedingly beloued at Court of all Men. . . . He goes to Ramsbury to see his Father on Wednesday next." And on November 29, using, as he frequently does, ciphers to represent names, he writes, "9000 [Lord Herbert] is

highly fauored by 1500 [Queen], for at his departure he had access vnto her, and was priuate an Houre; but he greatly wants advise. . . . This day he has gone to see 2000 [his Father], but wilbe heare again before Christmas."

According to our chronology, it would seem likely that about this time Sonnets 90 to 96 were written. Identifying Herbert with the friend of the poet to whom these Sonnets were addressed, it is not difficult to discern one probable cause for the complaint of diminished affection which these Sonnets contain. Herbert's attendance at Court and other occupations may have prevented frequent personal association with Shakespeare; and thus it may have seemed to Shakespeare that Herbert wanted to leave him (90), and steal himself away (92), and thus to bring the acquaintance to an end. Sonnet 91, with its mention of "high birth" and "wealth," "hounds," "hawks," and "horse," and "garments new-fangled ill," is entirely in accordance with the supposition that Shakespeare has in view Herbert's courtly associations and employments. But it would appear that there must have been also at this time certain particulars in Herbert's character and conduct deserving of grave censure. Shakespeare compares him to "Eve's apple" (93), and in 95 and 96 speaks out pretty broadly concerning rumours unfavourable to Herbert's moral conduct which were in circulation. With respect to these rumours the reader should compare Whyte's statement that "he greatly wants advice;" and, notwithstanding Herbert's advance in favour at Court, it is quite probable that there may have been much truth in the rumours in question. It is Clarendon who records Herbert's great licentiousness, who also asserts that he "was the most universally beloved and esteemed of any man of that age."

On November 28, 1599, Herbert left London for the country, and did not return for between three and four months. In December, according to Whyte, he became ill with an ague, and about the middle of January, when

"coming up towards the Court," he had a severe relapse, obliging him to go back. Towards the end of the month Herbert writes that "he hath a continuall Paine in his Head, and finds no Manner of Ease, but by taking of Tobacco." With such notices as we have, it would be unwise to connect these maladies with the moral aberrations previously adverted to. In March, however, Herbert again presented himself at Court. Writing on the 22nd of that month, Whyte says, "I believe he will prove a great man in Court."

During 1600 Herbert seems to have been very much his own master. At his solicitation his father's presence at Court was dispensed with, and Lord and Lady Pembroke arranged to stay all the summer at Wilton. On May 26 in this year, Herbert, accompanied by Sir Charles Danvers, went by water "almost as farre as Gravesend," to see Lady Rich and Lady Southampton. It must not be inferred from this visit that there were relations of an amatory nature between Herbert and Lady Rich, nor that he sympathised with the party of Essex, even though, on this occasion, he had for companion Sir Charles Danvers, who was destined to lose his life for his part in the rebellion of the following February.

During the next month, on June 16, there was a remarkable festivity at Blackfriars. William Herbert was present, as also was a lady with whom we shall be still further concerned in the sequel. The occasion of this festivity was the marriage of Lord Herbert (son of the Earl of Worcester) with a lady of the Court, Mrs. Anne Russell.[1] The Queen herself was there; and having come to Blackfriars by water, she was carried from the waterside in a lectica borne by six knights. The bride was conducted to church by the nobleman with whom we are now more

[1] Of course in Elizabethan times the title "Mistress" did not indicate that a lady had been previously married.

particularly concerned, William Herbert (son of Lord Pembroke) and Lord Cobham. The Queen supped and passed the night at Lord Cobham's. After supper there was a masque in which eight ladies splendidly arrayed were to perform a new and unusual dance. The names of the ladies are given as "My Lady Doritye, Mrs. Fitton, Mrs. Carey, Mrs. Onslow, Mrs. Southwell, Mrs. Bes Russell, Mrs. Darcy and my Lady Blanche Somerset." "Their Attire," Whyte says, "is this: Each hath a skirt of Cloth of Siluer, a Mantell of Carnacion Taffete cast vnder the Arme, and their Haire loose about their Shoulders, curiously knotted and interlaced." The leader in this performance was Mrs. Fitton or Fytton, the lady particularly alluded to above. "And delicate it was to see 8 Ladies soe pretily and richly attired." "Mrs. Fitton went to the Queen, and woed her to dawnce; her Majestie asked what she was; *Affection*, she said. *Affection!* said the Queen; *Affection* is false.[1] Yet her Majestie rose and dawnced."

Two months later (August 16) Whyte says of William Herbert, "My Lord Harbert is very well. I now heare litle of that Matter intended by 600 [Earl of Nottingham] towards hym; only I observe he makes very much of hym; but I dont find any disposition at all in this gallant young lord to marry." A few days before he had said, "My Lord Harbert is very well thought of, and keepes company with the best and grauest in Court, and is well thought of amongst them." Subsequently in this year (September and October) Herbert was training himself in various accomplishments, and athletic and martial exercises. He has resolved "this Yeare to shew hymself a Man at Arms."

[1] Chamberlain, writing to Carleton, says that the masque was "in name of the Muses that came to seeke one of their fellowes." The adroit substitution of "Affection" for the name of a Muse was probably unexpected.

On January 19 of the following year, 1601 (according to our reckoning), Herbert's father died. In a letter in the Record Office from John Chamberlain to Dudley Carleton on February 3, 1601, the event is thus alluded to:—"The earle of Pembroke died a fortnight since, leaving his lady as bare as he could, and bestowing all on the young Lord, even to her jewells."[1] William Herbert was now, therefore, Earl of Pembroke. The next notice we have of this young nobleman refers also to the lady mentioned before as taking a prominent part in the festivities at Blackfriars. It is to be found in the postscript of a letter of February 5, written from the Court by Sir Robert Cecil to Sir George Carew. The matter recorded is to a considerable extent in harmony with particulars previously adverted to:—"We have no news but that there is a misfortune befallen Mistress Fitton, for she is proved with child, and the Earl of Penbrooke, being examined, confesseth a fact, but utterly renounceth all marriage. I fear they will both dwell in the Tower awhile, for the Queen hath vowed to send them thither" (*Calendar of Carew MSS.*).[2] Reserving some comment on this extract, it may be sufficient to say here that the facts recorded are in harmony with indications of Herbert's character previously adverted to. Then we come to a letter (in the Record Office) from Tobie Matthew to Dudley Carleton on March 25, which contains the following remarkable, and, at first sight, enigmatical passage:—"The Earle of Pembrooke is committed to the Fleet: his

[1] *Chamberlain's Letters during the Reign of Queen Elizabeth*, edited for the Camden Society by S. Williams, p. 100.

[2] In a letter of January 26 from Sir John Stanhope to Sir G. Carew there is a reference relating possibly to the state of things before the examination of Pembroke: "Of the persecution [which] is like to befall the poor maid's chamber in Court, and of Fytton's afflictions, and lastly her commitment to my Lady Hawkyns, of the discouragement thereby of the rest, though it be now out of your element to think of, yet I doubt not but that some friend doth more particularly advertise you."

cause is deliuered of a boy who is dead."[1] The words "his cause" seem to lay the blame on the lady, as if she had been the wooer. They are thus in harmony with what is to be found in another document in the Record Office :— "One M^rs Martin, who dwelt at the Chopinge Knife near Ludgate, tould me y^t she hath seene preists mary gentlewomen at the Courte, in that tyme when that M^res Fytton was in great fauour, and one of her Maiesties maids of honor, and duringe the time y^t the Earle of Pembrooke fauord her she would put off her head tire and tucke vpp her clothes and take a large white cloake, and marche as though she had bene a man to meete the said Earle out of the Courte." The document from which this extract is taken is concerned with the proceedings of the Jesuits. It has neither date nor signature. It contains, however, an allusion to the preparations for the attack on Geneva, which occurred in December 1602. The approximate date of this document may therefore be given as October 1602, a date which has been marked upon it in pencil. The reader should notice how the "great favour" Mrs. Fytton is here described as enjoying agrees with the prominent position she occupied in the festivities at Blackfriars.

We have now no difficulty in accounting for Lord Pembroke's imprisonment in the Fleet. The offence was far too grievous to be overlooked by such a monarch as Elizabeth. Mrs. Fytton had been not only a maid of honour, but, in accordance with the indications given, would seem to have been on specially intimate relations with the Queen. Lord Pembroke, however, did not remain very long in prison. There is in the British Museum (Lansd. MS. 88,

[1] When this allusion was first discovered the words "his cause" seemed difficult; but it was rightly suggested by Mr. A. H. Grant that the words would mean the woman who was the cause of Lord Pembroke's getting into trouble. The truth of this suggestion was seen when the allusions in other documents were discovered.

leaf 23) a letter from him to Mr. (or Sir) Michael Hicks, asking that the payment of a loan may be deferred :—

"S^{r}, If you will renue the bonds for that mony, that will be shortly due vnto you from me, for six months longer, you shall haue yo^{r} interest truly payd at the day, & the same security w^{ch} you haue allready, & besides you shall doe me a very extraordinarie kindnes w^{ch} I will striue to deserue by ever being y^{r} most affectionate frend,

"PEMBROKE.

"WHITEHALL *this 8th of May.*"

The date is important. The letter must have been written about the time which evidence previously adduced indicates as that when the reconciliation between Shakespeare and his friend took place, and Sonnets 100 to 126 were written. The imprisonment, its causes, and events connected therewith, together with the change which ensued in Pembroke's position with regard to the Queen and Court, might well cause his thoughts to revert to Shakespeare. And there may possibly have been, in connection with Mrs. Fitton, another cause for Pembroke's attention being recalled to Shakespeare (see next chapter). On the other hand, Shakespeare's sympathy may very well have been awakened by the imprisonment and disgrace of his noble friend, which was probably enough the common talk of the town. There does not appear to be (in the Sonnets) any allusion to Pembroke's imprisonment. This, we may well believe, was far too delicate and disagreeable a subject to be even hinted at, a view which is in accordance with allusions to be found in letters from Pembroke in Lord Salisbury's collection at Hatfield.

Pembroke's letter to Hicks, already cited, was dated from Whitehall; and it appears that he held, or was intended to hold, some office in connection with the Parliament which met in the autumn of 1601, though what the nature of the

office was, if other than supporting the Queen's policy in Parliament, does not appear. In one of the Hatfield letters from Pembroke to Sir R. Cecil (bearing merely the date 1601), he asks for help in obtaining the Queen's permission to travel. When the Parliament is ended she will have no employment for him. Therefore he believes the suit will not be difficult. He hopes she will not so far extend her anger to him as to confine him to a country now become "hateful to him of all others." After a statement like this we need not wonder that Shakespeare should make no allusion to the imprisonment and connected circumstances. Pembroke appears to have been very anxious indeed to obtain permission to go abroad, and the Queen seems to have given permission and then revoked it. In a letter of June 19 to Cecil from Baynard's Castle (Lord Salisbury's Coll.) Pembroke says:—

"Sir,—the imposition you layd upon me for my wardship, though it be a very heavy burthen on my weake meanes, hauing so many greate payments to make besides, yet since it is her Ma^tie^ pleasure, I will not dispute it, but wholly submitt my self to her sacred will. I think my self much fauoured by her Ma^tie^ that it would pleas her to giue me leaue to goe abroad to follow mine owne busines."

We may thus see a probable reason for the payment to Hicks being deferred; and what he says of "the imposition for my wardship" receives an explanation from the fact that, his father dying before he had attained his majority, he had been for about three months a ward of the Crown. Under the special circumstances the fine imposed was very probably heavier than usual. There are, however, in this letter some other particulars of greater interest, including an evident allusion to the recent imprisonment in the Fleet:—

"I cannot forbeare telling of you that yet I endure a grieuous Imprisonment, & so (though not in the world's misjudging opinion) yet in myself, I feel still the same or a

wors punishment, for doe you account him a freeman that is restrained from coming where he most desires to be, & debar'd from enjoying that comfort in respect of which all other earthly joys seeme miseries, though he have a whole world els to walk in? In this vile case am I, whose miserable fortune it is, to be banish'd from the sight of her, in whose fauor the ballance consisted of my misery or happines, and whose Incomparable beauty was the onely sonne of my little world, that alone had power to give it life and heate. Now judge you whether this be a bondage or no: for mine owne part, I protest I think my fortune as slauish as any mans that lives fettered in a galley. You haue sayd you loued me, & I have often found it; but a greater testimony you can neuer show of it then to vse your best means to ridd me out of this hell, & then shall I account you the restorer of that which was farre dearer vnto me than my life."

A comparison of this last extract with several of the Sonnets brings into view some analogies which are at least curious. If this resemblance stood alone, not much perhaps could be made of the likeness between 33, line 9, "Even so my sun one early morn did shine," and "the onely sonne of my little world" in the letter. It must be observed, however, that the Queen is Pembroke's sun; for there appears no escape from the conclusion that Elizabeth is intended by the lady of "incomparable beauty."[1] In the Sonnet it is Pembroke himself (or rather Herbert) who is Shakespeare's sun. But, passing over one or two other resemblances, the most remarkable analogy and correspondence is with Sonnets 57 and 58. These Sonnets refer to a brief interval of separation and estrangement between the poet and his friend. The latter is addressed in 57 as "my sovereign," probably with something of irony. With reference to the

[1] So both Mr. Harrison and Dr. Furnivall, and the conclusion appears irresistible.

interval, the poet speaks of "the bitterness of absence," and describes himself as "like a sad slave." Instead of "the bitterness of absence" of 57, there is in 58 the remarkable line, "Th'imprison'd absence of your liberty." The only probable interpretation of this line appears to be, that Shakespeare speaks of himself as "imprison'd" on account of the absence of his friend (who exercises his "liberty" to go where he pleases), and the irrepressible and unsatisfied longing which the poet feels. In the thirteenth line (58) the poet describes the waiting for his absent friend as "hell." Now, turning again to the latter, we find that, as Shakespeare was debarred from the society of his friend, called in 57 his "sovereign," so Pembroke is "debar'd from enjoying that comfort" which consisted in the presence and favour of the lady of "incomparable beauty," the Queen; and this again constituted for Pembroke "a very grievous imprisonment," like the "imprisoned absence" of 58. And, as the poet is a "slave," surrendered to the will of another, so, in the letter, Pembroke protests that he thinks his "fortune as slauish as any mans that lives fettered in a galley." Then both Shakespeare and Pembroke describe themselves as being in "hell." These various resemblances are remarkable and striking, and as the letter was written from London, the possibility may suggest itself that, if it was written by the hand of Pembroke, it was really composed by Shakespeare. But it is perhaps more likely that Pembroke borrowed ideas from the Sonnets which he had received from Shakespeare. The words "my sovereign" in 57, and some coincidence of circumstances, may have caused him to revert especially to 57 and 58.[1] Taken together with other evidence, the resemblances just adverted to are possibly of

[1] Professor Dowden has shown (*Academy*, January 30, 1886) that language in part closely similar to that of Pembroke's letter and the Sonnets is to be found in Chaucer:—"Arcite, in Chaucer's tale, has seen the bright

some importance, as tending to show that the Sonnets cited were written previously to the date of the letter, June 19, 1601. There is another letter of Pembroke's, to be noticed directly (p. 64), written between two and three months later, displaying a good deal of literary power; but it is very noteworthy that its poetical imagery cannot be regarded as borrowed from Shakespeare's Sonnets. This letter, however, was not written from London, but from Ramsbury in Wiltshire. Possibly the difference of imagery may be connected with the difference of place and associations.

A letter of Pembroke's in August (Hatfield MSS.) is interesting as showing that those who, according to Whyte, had regarded him as "a melancholy young man" (*supra*, p. 52), had probably some grounds for their opinion, though this feature in his character may have helped to conciliate for him the esteem and sympathy of the poet who could write such Sonnets as 66, "Tir'd with all these, for restful death I cry," or 71, "No longer mourn for me when I am dead." The letter referred to was written to Cecil, and it bears the date "13 August, 1601:"—

"S^{r} I have not yet bene a day in the country & I am as weary of it as if I had been prisoner there seaven yere. I see I shall never turn good Justice of peace. therfore I pray if the Queene determine to continue my banishment, & preferr sweet S^{r} Edward before me, that you will assist me wth yo^{r} best meanes to gett leaue to goe into some other land, that the change of the Climate may purge me of

---

Emily from his prison window; he is enfranchised, but exiled from her sight, while Palamon remains in the cell. Says Arcite, the freeman:—

'Alas the day that I was born!
Now is my prisonn werse than biforn;
Now is me schape eternally to dwelle
Nought in purgatorie, but in *helle.*'"

An argument from parallel expressions and similar imagery is, of course, one of probability, of which it is for the reader to judge.

Melancholie, for els I shall neuer be fitt for any ciuill society. I have written sorrowfully complaining to my Lo. Admirall that he will be pleased to moue my sute againe, since there is no apparence of grace. The pattent of the forrest of Deane could not so speedily be gotten before my going out of towne, but very shortly Arthur Massinger[1] shall attend you wth it, though there be so much part under generall terms that I feare me it will seeme slight. let me still haue the happines to be beloued by you & I will constantly remaine,

"Yo^{r} most affectionate frend
to be coñaunded
"Pembroke."

The patent of the Forest of Dean, conferring, no doubt, privileges and emoluments of greater or less value, was to be returned, it would seem, to the Queen, in order that the grant made to the late Earl of Pembroke might be, at least as his son and successor hoped, renewed by her to himself. But this hope was not to be realised. Pembroke was to feel still more what a woman, and that woman a queen, can do when piqued and offended. Whatever view she may have taken in other respects, Pembroke would certainly appear to have thought that one element of her indignation was the *spretæ injuria formæ*. It is, no doubt, on this account that, in the letter of June 19, evidently intended to reach her eye, she is described as a "lady of incomparable beauty," notwithstanding her near approach to the threescore and ten. The patent of the Forest of Dean was, however, as the Rev. W. A. Harrison has discovered,

[1] This would certainly appear to have been the father of the poet Philip Massinger, who also has been regarded as a protégé of the Herberts. On this view, however, it is, as has been remarked, somewhat surprising that, in dedicating in 1624 his play *The Bondman* to Philip, Earl of Montgomery (brother of the writer of the above letter), he says, "I could never arrive at the happiness to be made known to your lordship."

destined for Pembroke's rival, Sir Edward Winter, the "sweet Sir Edward" mentioned above. This appears in the following extract from the *Calendar of State Papers*, Domestic Series, 1603–1610; and the entry shows, moreover, that eventually Pembroke obtained from James the much-desired patent: the date given is January 10, 1608:—"Grant to the Earl of Pembroke, on surrender of Sir Edw. Winter, of the office of Constable of the Castle of St. Briavels, in the forest of Dean, Gloucestershire, with the keeping of the deer and woods there." It is probable, from the language employed in Pembroke's letter, that Winter was a youth endowed with personal beauty, like Pembroke himself. The fondness of the Queen for these young men makes still more conspicuous a feature of her character tolerably well known.

From a longer, and perhaps, in some respects, more important letter, written about three weeks later from Pembroke to Cecil (Hatfield MSS.), it appears that the grant to Sir Edward Winter had been already made, or at least resolved on:—

"Sr what loue & thankfullnes you could haue expected from me if I had preuayled, the same to to (*sic*) the best of my power you shall find me ready ready (*sic*) to performe on all occasions now I am disgraced. Her Ma^{tie}, as I heard when she promised M^{r} Mumpersons a park, after my Lo: yo^{r} fathers death, when she knew how nearely it concerned my Lo: Burleigh in honor, recalled her promise, preserued my Lo: honor & gratiously satisfyed her seruant an other way. If it had pleased her Ma^{tie} as gratiously to haue conceaved, in this matter of the forrest of Deane, of that poore reputation I was desirous to preserue, the maintenance whereof might haue enabled to doe her Ma^{tie} more honor & seruice than now I am able to performe, I should haue bene happy & S^{r} Edward might an other way as well haue bene satisfyed. But since her Ma^{tie} hath in her wise-

dome thought fitt to lay this disgrace upon me: I accuse nothing but mine owne unworthines w^{ch} since I so plainly read in mine owne fortunes I will alter my hopes, and teach them to propose vnto them selvs no other ends then such as they shall be sure to receaue no disgrace in. The haulk that is once canuast will the next time take heede of the nett, and shall I that was borne a man & capable of reason committ greater folly than byrds that haue nought but sence to direct them? If her Ma^{tie} make this the returning way for her fauor, though it be like the way of saluation narrow & crooked, yet my hopes dare not trauell thorough the ruggednes of it, for they stumble so often that before they come half way they despaire of passing such difficulties. There be some things yet in her Ma^{ties} hands to dispose of, w^{ch} if it would pleas her to grace me wth might happely in some measure, patch vp my disgraces in the opinion of the world. But I haue vowed neuer againe to be a sutor, since in my first sute I haue receaued such a blow. I should be infinitely bound to you if you could but gett a promise that I should haue leaue to trauell after the Parliament: it would make me more able to doe her Ma^{tie} & my cuntry seruice & lessen if not wipe out the memory of my disgraces but whatsoeuer shall become of me, I will euer wish you all happines & continue

"Yo^{r} most affectionate frend
to be comaunded
PEMBROKE.

"RAMSBURY, *the second of September.*"

The repetition of the words "to" and "ready" at the commencement of the letter is remarkable; and it may be reasonably accounted for as caused by nervous agitation consequent on receiving intelligence that the patent had been transferred to Winter. In accordance with what was said above, this letter does not recall the language and

imagery of the Sonnets. The letter gives evidence of Pembroke's imaginative power. Buffeted by slights, disgraces, and disappointments, he is like the newly-captured hawk which has been "canuast." This "canvassing" appears to describe the shaking of the bird in a canvas bag or sheet, in order to subdue it by terror into obedience.[1] Then the seeming way of return to the Queen's favour is like the narrow and crooked way of salvation, but so intolerably rough and rugged, that, stumbling again and again, Pembroke despairs of ever reaching the goal. The request for permission to travel is again urged, but still without success. To the Shakespeare student the letter is especially interesting as tending to show that William Herbert was not wanting in such intellectual endowments as might render him not quite unworthy of the high honour of friendship with Shakespeare.

The facts which have been set forth aid materially towards explaining the definite close to which in 126 Shakespeare brings the series of Sonnets addressed to his friend. There was a break in the course of Pembroke's life. If the Queen's favour could not be regained, he desired strongly to go abroad. The request for permission to travel was urged again and again. In expectation of absence and separation for an indefinite period, Shakespeare might very well consider it suitable to bring the series of Sonnets to a conclusion. And here again our chronology, which places Sonnets 100 to 126 in the spring or early summer of 1601, is entirely in accordance with the facts.

Pembroke's strong desire to go abroad in order to wipe off or lessen his "disgraces in the opinion of the world" may very possibly have influenced the Queen in what seems to have been the final determination of her resentful mind

[1] Cotgrave gives as signification of "canvassed," *berné, forbatu.* "Forbatu," again, is represented by *canuased,* or *beaten thoroughly; swinged out of doors.* Among the meanings of "berné" are *canuased,* or *tossed in a sive.*

that he should be banished from Court and "keep house in the country." With this determination and the facts previously mentioned in view, we need have no difficulty in understanding the lines of John Davies of Hereford, written on the accession of James :—

> "Pembrooke, to Court (to which thou wert made strange)
> Goe, doe thine homage to thy Soueraigne,
> Weepe, and reioyce, for this sadd-ioyful Change;
> Then weepe for ioy, thou needst not tears to faine
> Sith late thine Eies did naught els entertaine."[1]

Pembroke's relations with Shakespeare, if interrupted during the closing period of Elizabeth's life, were probably resumed after the accession of James. In this particular the words employed in the Dedication of the First Folio (1623) scarcely leave room for doubt :—"But since your LL. have beene pleas'd to thinke these trifles some thing heretofore; and have prosequuted both them, and their Authour liuing with so much fauour; we hope that (they out-liuing him, and he not hauing the fate, common with some, to be exequutor to his owne writings) you will use the like indulgence toward them, you haue done vnto their parent."

The question may suggest itself whether the "favour" of Pembroke and his brother took so practical a form as to contribute to the worldly prosperity which Shakespeare enjoyed in his later years. In accordance with the ideas of our own age, it has been too customary to ascribe this prosperity mainly or exclusively to commercial or professional success in connection with the theatre. There is, however, a well-known tradition recorded by Rowe, and alleged to have been derived from Davenant, to the effect that Lord Southampton "gave him a thousand pounds to go through with a purchase which he heard he had a mind to." The time when this tradition was recorded by Rowe

[1] *Microcosmos*, Preface, in vol. i. of Dr. Grosart's edition.

was too distant from the alleged fact for us to allow the record to pass without scrutiny. In its origin it may have been a mere inference from the dedications to the *Venus and Adonis* and *Lucrece*. Or, if the tradition have any truth in it, most likely Southampton has become, to a great extent, confused with Pembroke, so that the latter was really the bountiful donor. With regard to his friend of the Sonnets, Shakespeare speaks of that friend's "dear purchas'd right" (117), and he says also, in 53, that his bounty was "like the foizon of the year." Then as to Shakespeare's having a mind to a purchase, it should be remembered that his principal purchases or investments were made after the dates of the first series of Sonnets. Moreover, both Clarendon and Antony à Wood speak of Pembroke's liberality. Clarendon says of him:—"As his conversation was most with men of the most pregnant parts and understanding, so towards any such, who needed support or encouragement, though unknown, if fairly recommended to him, he was very liberal" (Bk. I. § 122). And Antony à Wood says in the *Athenæ Oxonienses*:—"He was not only a great favourer of learned and ingenious men, but was himself learned, and endowed to admiration with a poetical genie, as by those amorous and not inelegant Aires and poems of his composition doth evidently appear; some of which had musical notes set to them by Henry Lawes."

The poetical tendency thus spoken of is obviously a matter of considerable importance with regard to the friendship with Shakespeare. It must be added that, in the year 1660, was published a small volume of poems ascribed to Pembroke and Sir Benjamin Ruddier. The volume was edited by John Donne, who, however, admitted that some poems, not written by either of the writers named on the title, may have surreptitiously got in. Hallam has asserted (*Lit. of Europe*, Part III. chap. v. 56) that the poems in this volume furnish no illustration of the Sonnets. This statement, however well founded with

regard to most of these poems, can scarcely be admitted with respect to at least one, for whose genuineness there is twofold evidence. Not only is it marked P. (Pembroke) in the volume, but it appears also, with some important differences, and with Pembroke's name, in the Browne MS. in the British Museum (Lansd. MS. 777, f. 73), a MS. which bears the date 1650, that is, twenty years after Pembroke's death; but the poem may have been transcribed in the MS. at an earlier date. The original form of the poem is probably represented in the MS. :—

"Soules ioye, when I am gone,
And you alone,
Which cannot be,
Since I must leaue my selfe with thee,
And carry thee with me ;[1]

"Yet when vnto our Eyes
Absence denyes
Each others sight
And makes to vs a constant night
When others change to light;

"O giue no waye to griefe,
But let beliefe
Of mutuall loue
This wonder to the vulgar proue,
Our bodies, not we, moue.

"Let not thy wit beweepe
Wounds but sense deepe
For while we misse,
By distance, our lipp-ioyning blisse,
Even then our soules shall kisse.

"Fooles haue no meanes to meete
But by their feete ;
Why should our Claye
Ouer our Spiritts so much swaye,
To tye vs to that waye."

[1] Cf. *Ant. and Cle.*, Act. i. sc. 3, ll. 102–104 :—

"Our separation so abides and flies,
That thou, residing here, go'st yet with me,
And I, hence fleeting, here remain with thee."

"Soules ioye" of the first line occurs also, it may be observed, in Sidney's *Astrophil and Stella* (48). But when in the first stanza Pembroke tells his lady-love that, while absent, he must still bear her with him, and leave himself with her, one is easily reminded of the exchange of hearts of which Shakespeare speaks in 22 and in 62, lines 13, 14:—

> "'Tis thee (myself) that for myself I praise,
> Painting my age with beauty of thy days."

Then, as in the Sonnets (43, line 13) Shakespeare says that all days are "nights to see" till he sees his friend, so in the poem Pembroke speaks of absence as making "a constant night," while other nights "change to light." Then, as to the kissing of souls, and of lovers finding a way to meet other than "by their feet," it is easy to see a resemblance to those meetings by night of which Shakespeare speaks in 27:—

> "For then my thoughts (from far where I abide)
> Intend a zealous pilgrimage to thee,
> And keep my drooping eyelids open wide,
> Looking on darkness which the blind do see;
> Save that my soul's imaginary sight
> Presents thy shadow to my sightless view,
> Which, like a jewel hung in ghastly night,
> Makes black night beauteous, and her old face new."

Similarities such as these must be taken in conjunction with other evidence which has been adduced. They are certainly worthy of consideration, even if it be objected that they may be found elsewhere either wholly or in part. At least they may suffice to set aside the assertion of Hallam with regard to Pembroke's Poems and Shakespeare's Sonnets.

With regard to the personal beauty of William Herbert, such portraits as we possess would scarcely justify those exceedingly warm eulogies in which Shakespeare indulged. But these portraits, so far as I am aware, represent Herbert in mature life, of the age probably of forty or more, when the beauty of youth would have passed away. We should remember the prediction of Shakespeare himself:—

> "When forty winters shall besiege thy brow,
> And dig deep trenches in thy beauty's field,
> Thy youth's proud livery, so gaz'd on now,
> Will be a tatter'd weed, of small worth held" (2).

William Herbert's mother was certainly beautiful; and it is probable enough that this beauty would be inherited by her son:—

> "Thou art thy mother's glass, and she in thee
> Calls back the lovely April of her prime."

It should also be noticed that, with regard to Philip, William Herbert's brother, Clarendon speaks of the influence exercised by his "comeliness of person" in "drawing the King's eyes towards him with affection" (Bk. i. 127). The allusion is, of course, to King James. Francis Osborne, also, in his *Memoires on the Reigns of Queen Elizabeth and King James*, speaks of Philip as "a man caressed by King James for his handsome face, which kept him not long company." There need not, thus, be any difficulty in admitting the probability that William Herbert was as a youth exceedingly handsome, though, under any circumstances, the poetical and complimentary character of the Sonnets would have to be borne in mind.

The social position of William Herbert and the high rank of his family would suit well the allusions to "so fair a house" in 13, to his "birth" and "wealth" in 37, and to the great difference between the station of the poet and that of his friend; a difference preventing public recognition of the acquaintance:—

> "I may not ever-more acknowledge thee,
> Lest my bewailed guilt should do thee shame,
> Nor thou with public kindness honour me,
> Unless thou take that honour from thy name" (36).

The amiability of Shakespeare's friend is not only expressly stated, but is implied also in the poet's deep love. Of Pembroke, Clarendon asserts that he "was the most universally beloved and esteemed of any man of that age."

Pembroke's licentiousness has been already alluded to; and this feature of his character is entirely in accordance with the facts of the Sonnets. It has been said that, supposing the Sonnets to relate to actual facts with which Pembroke was concerned, he would have felt strong repugnance to such publication of his early transgressions as that made in 1609 in the Sonnets. But it may be answered, that the Sonnets had been already, to a greater or less extent, diffused in manuscript. Pembroke's character, moreover, was probably too well known to allow of his feeling very anxious about loss of reputation on the ground alleged. There was, however, some slight concealment afforded by the designation Mr. W. H., seeing that he had now been for some eight years Earl of Pembroke. The designation of a nobleman by his family name rather than his title cannot be looked upon as unprecedented;[1] and, in addition to what has been just said, it may be observed that there was a special propriety in such designation in this case, as by far the larger portion of the Sonnets relate to the commencement of the acquaintance with Shakespeare, and to a period considerably antecedent to William Herbert's succession to the title.

A much smaller amount of evidence than that which has been adduced would raise a probability that William Herbert was the favoured friend of Shakespeare. But if, keeping always in view the Dedication of 1623, the reader takes into account the multitude of accordant particulars which have been indicated, he can scarcely avoid the conclusion that probability has become changed into certainty.

[1] Professor Minto refers, very appropriately, to the fact that Lord Buckhurst is designated in *England's Parnassus* (1600) as *M.* Sackville. This designation, indeed, with slight change in the termination, occurs again and again, although Thomas Sackville had been Baron Buckhurst for a considerably longer time than William Herbert had been Earl of Pembroke, when the Sonnets were issued in 1609. Moreover, if some slight disguise was intended, epithets of honour, suitable only to a nobleman, could not be added to the "Mr. W. H." of the Dedication.

Mrs Mary Fitton.

Dawsons Ph.ſc

CHAPTER VIII.

THE DARK LADY.

As the first series of Sonnets (1 to 126) is mainly occupied with a young male friend of Shakespeare's, and with the relations subsisting between this friend and the poet, so the second series (127 to 152) is chiefly concerned with a certain dark lady, between whom and Shakespeare there was evidently a very close intimacy. This lady was a brunette of strongly marked type, destitute of the characteristics of beauty most highly valued in Shakespeare's time. The poet could note in her "a thousand errors:"—

> "My mistress' eyes are nothing like the sun;
> Coral is far more red than her lips' red:
> If snow be white, why then her breasts are dun;
> If hairs be wires, black wires grow on her head.
> I have seen roses damask'd, red and white,
> But no such roses see I in her cheeks."

She had not even—so it would seem—the charm of a soft and melodious voice:—

> "I love to hear her speak,—yet well I know
> That music hath a far more pleasing sound" (130).

She was, moreover, of blemished character. She could not be satisfied with the attentions of the poet, though she professed fidelity (137, 138, 152). Yet to Shakespeare her looks were "pretty looks" (139); and he could disregard even the blackness of her deeds (131). Though she was abhorred by others (150), her attraction was to him so irre-

sistible as to overpower both his eyes and his reason. He became mad with love :—

> " My thoughts and my discourse as mad men's are
> At random from the truth vainly express'd ;
> For I have sworn thee fair, and thought thee bright,
> Who art as black as hell, as dark as night " (147).

What, then, was the cause of her thus dominating over Shakespeare's soul ? He himself asks the question :—

> " O, from what power hast thou this powerful might,
> With insufficiency my heart to sway ? "
>
> " Whence hast thou this becoming of things ill ? " (150).

Some answer is afforded by the repeated mention of the lady's raven-black, quick-glancing eyes (127, 139). Shakespeare loved those eyes :—

> " Thine eyes I love, and they, as pitying me,
> Knowing thy heart torments me with disdain ;
> Have put on black, and loving mourners be,
> Looking with pretty ruth upon my pain.
> And truly not the morning sun of heaven
> Better becomes the gray cheeks of the east,
> Nor that full star that ushers in the even,
> Doth half that glory to the sober west,
> As those two mourning eyes become thy face " (132).

Then, again, Shakespeare evidently loved music ; and she was skilled in touching the virginal. He was spell-bound as he listened to " the wiry concord," and saw the " jacks " dance and leap, swayed by her gentle fingers (128). She was a woman of quick wit, and she had full command of her powers. She could woo without causing disgust, or so use disdain as to quicken desire. Thus, such was her tact and " warrantise of skill " (150), that she knew well, not only how to ensnare, but how to retain the prize she had won. Probably to such endowments she added superior social rank. This may be implied in her skill as a player on the virginal. It is not at all likely that such an accomplishment, in the time of Elizabeth, would be so common

as the pianoforte-playing of our own days. A conclusion similar to that drawn from her musical skill may be inferred also from her soft and tender hands (128). And it is in accordance with other indications that Shakespeare speaks of her as his "triumphant prize" and himself as "proud of this pride" (151).

Here, however, the question may suggest itself, Is it possible to identify the dark lady of the Sonnets with any person otherwise known? Identifying Shakespeare's friend Mr. W. H. with William Herbert, we must come to the conclusion that William Herbert had amatory relations with the dark lady. Contemporary notices already cited show that he had amatory relations with Mrs. Mary Fitton. This fact may make it not incredible that the one is to be identified with the other. There is certainly a remarkable similarity of characteristics. In both we may see strong passions conjoined with an imperious, masterful will. The dark lady of the Sonnets has been compared with Cleopatra. Thus Professor Dowden:—"May we dare to conjecture that Cleopatra, queen and courtesan, black from 'Phœbus' amorous pinches,' a 'lass unparalleled,' has some kinship through the imagination with the dark lady of the virginal?" And the queenly, commanding qualities of Mrs. Fitton are not to be mistaken. Her character, in its "strength," (150, line 7) resembles that of her royal mistress, who declared, "I have the heart of a king, and of a king of England too." She could, as we learn from Mrs. Martin (*supra*, p. 57), tuck up her clothes, take off her head-dress, and, attired in a large white cloak, march off "as though she had been a man," to meet the Earl of Pembroke outside the Court. It is in accordance with Mrs. Martin's description that Mrs. Fitton takes the lead in the masque and dance at Blackfriars, and that she it is who asks Elizabeth to dance, telling the Queen that her name is "Affection." That a lady endowed with characteristics such as those of Mrs. Fitton should become notorious is what

we might expect; and this notoriety is probably implied in the designation used in connection with Mrs. Martin's testimony, "*that* Mrs. Fytton." It seems certainly also implied in Tobie Matthew's description of her as "his cause," that is, the cause of Pembroke's getting into trouble (*supra*, p. 57), without any further indication of the person intended. This description, "his cause," is entirely in accordance with what is said in the Sonnets concerning the dark lady's conduct to both the poet and his young friend. With regard to the latter, she is described as "wooing" him (41, 144), and as "running after him." "So run'st thou after that which flies from thee" (143, line 9). And Shakespeare tells the dark lady that it would be unwise for her to say anything about his "amiss" lest he should be tempted to show that her "sweet self" was guilty of his "faults," and that she had betrayed him into sin (151). Shakespeare's "amiss" and his being "forsworn" (152) resulted, we may presume, from his having already a wife, who was living probably at Stratford-on-Avon.

We are not able to connect Mrs. Fitton personally with Shakespeare by proof as direct as that which, in the case of Herbert, is furnished by the Dedication of the First Folio. The Rev. W. A. Harrison, however, some time ago called attention to evidence which brings Mrs. Fitton into connection with a member of Shakespeare's company, that is, the Lord Chamberlain's company, leaving it to be easily inferred that she must have been acquainted with the members of the company generally, and especially with such as were more prominent.[1] In 1600 William Kemp, the clown in the company, dedicated his *Nine daies wonder* to "Mistris Anne Fitton, Mayde of Honour to most sacred Mayde, Royal Queene Elizabeth." The book gives an account of a journey which Kemp had performed, morris-dancing, from London to Norwich. As Dyce maintained,

[1] *Academy*, July 5, 1884.

when he edited Kemp's book for the Camden Society, Mrs. Fitton's Christian name was given erroneously as "Anne." The error may have originated from Kemp not being well acquainted with Mrs. Fitton's Christian name. Perhaps, however, it is more probable that he wrote "Marie," a name which might be so written as to be easily mistaken for "Anne." But, however this may be, Elizabeth certainly had no maid of honour *Anne* Fitton in 1599 or 1600. It follows that the person intended by Kemp was the Mrs. Mary Fitton with whom we are at present concerned; and a good deal of light is thus thrown on her character. That one of the Queen's maids of honour should be chosen as the patroness of a publication of so comparatively frivolous a character as this of Kemp's might well seem surprising. But facts already adduced make this much less wonderful. Kemp, moreover, adopts a style of address which under ordinary circumstances might seem most unsuitable in writing publicly to a distinguished lady of the Court. "In the waine," he says, "of my little wit I am forst to desire your protection else every Ballad-singer will proclaime me bankrupt of honesty." Afterwards he gives as one of the objects he had in view in the publication, "To shew my duety to your honourable selfe, whose fauours (among other bountifull friends) make me (dispight this sad world) iudge my hert Corke and my heeles feathers, so that me thinkes I could fly to Rome (at least hop to Rome, as the olde Prouerb is) with a Morter on my head." These facts are interesting and important, and, even taken alone, they would go far towards removing the difficulty which might otherwise be felt about Shakespeare's forming a connection with a lady of so high rank as one of the Queen's maids of honour.

An objection, however, to identifying Mrs. Fitton with the lady of the Sonnets has been drawn from this very dedication of Kemp's.[1] In addressing so very dark a lady

[1] *Saturday Review*, April 17, 1886, p. 545.

as the lady of the Sonnets evidently was, would Kemp have dared to speak so disparagingly as he does of "a Blackamoore"?—"But, in a word, your poore seruant offers the truth of his progresse and profit to your honourable view; receive it, I beseech you, such as it is, rude and plaine; for I know your pure iudgment lookes as soone to see beauty in a Blackamoore, or heare smooth speach from a Stammerer, as to finde any thing but blunt mirth in a Morrice dauncer, especially such a one as Will Kemp, that hath spent his life in mad Iigges and merry iestes." In reply to the objection just mentioned, it must be observed that though the lady of the Sonnets is spoken of as "black" in contrast to Elizabethan fairness, yet it is by no means implied that her skin was like that of a negro. No: she was clearly a brunette: her complexion was "dun" (130, line 3)—a very different thing indeed. Then Kemp's allusion is not merely, or perhaps mainly, to the colour of a negro or "blackamoor." Probably he was thinking more of the features and modelling of the face of a negro, with their usual unsightliness, at least from our point of view. But, in any case, the disparity would be so great that Kemp's allusion can present no insuperable difficulty in the way of the identification.

What has just been said about Kemp and his dedication may easily suggest that, on Shakespeare's company performing at Court, Mrs. Fitton may have become interested in Shakespeare, either as the author of the play or otherwise, and so have introduced herself to him. A woman such as she was would scarcely find much difficulty about the introduction. This hypothesis agrees well with what is said in 151 about the dark lady being the cause of Shakespeare's fault. And then, with respect to Shakespeare's performing before the ladies of the Court, a very interesting and important piece of evidence must be adduced.

That there is a close analogy between a part of *Love's Labour's Lost* (Act iv. sc. 3, line 245 *sqq.*) and some lines

in the Sonnets has been for a long while known. Mr. Gerald Massey alluded to the fact, though without satisfactorily accounting for it. Perhaps the best illustration may be given by placing together four lines from Sonnet 127 and four lines from the play:—

> "Therefore my mistress' eyes[1] are raven-black,
> Her eyes so suited, and they mourners seem,
> At such who, not born fair, no beauty lack,
> Slandering creation with a false esteem" (127).

> "O, if in black my lady's brows be decked,
> It mourns that painting [and] usurping hair
> Should ravish doters with a false aspect,
> And therefore is she born to make black fair"
> (*L. L. L.*, Act iv. sc. 3).

Recently (1884) in the *Jahrbuch* of the German Shakespeare Society, Hermann Isaac asserted, with regard to the correspondences just adverted to, that the opinion "that the poet wrote the play a little after 1590, and then, towards the end of the century, took Sonnet 127 therefrom, is quite inconceivable. The only natural explanation is, that he at a certain time was inspired with so passionate a devotion to his brunette lady-love, that he not only celebrated her in his Sonnets, but also introduced her into his play as Rosaline, and had her praise expressed by Biron, his own dramatic representative. The passage in the play must have been written very soon after the Sonnet; but, possibly, the question might arise whether the Sonnet and the passage in the play belong to the time of the first composition of *Love's Labour's Lost*, 1591 or 1592, or to that of the re-editing of the play, about 1596."

It was the view of the late Mr. Spedding that in the fourth act "nearly the whole of the close of the act, from Berowne's 'Who sees the heavenly Rosaline?'" (Act iv. sc. 3, line 221), was introduced when, according to the title of the First Quarto, the play was "corrected and aug-

[1] "Hairs" is a conjectural reading instead of "eyes."

mented."[1] Now, since the title bears the date 1598, it may be inferred with probability that the re-editing took place either in this year or in that next preceding.[2] Moreover, it is very important that the play is given "as it was presented before her Highnes this last Christmas." "Her Highness" was the Queen, who would see the play, accompanied by the ladies of the Court. Mrs. Fitton would thus probably be one of the spectators; and, if she was the lady celebrated in the second series of Sonnets, it is not difficult to account for the remarkable agreement between the Sonnets and the Play. Shakespeare, we may infer, designed a special allusion to her in the description of Rosaline, just as, in what is said of the Princess, there are probably some things which he intended specially for the Queen; as, for example, the Princess being called "a gracious *moon*," the Queen's poetical designation being thus used (cf. 107, line 5, and *supra*, p. 23). And here it must be observed that this evidence points to the conclusion that Mrs. Fitton was in reality of exceptionally dark complexion, a matter of great importance.[3] But was Mrs. Fitton a maid of honour in

[1] See Furnivall's "Forewords" to *L. L. L.* in Shakspere Quarto Facsimile, pp. viii., ix.

[2] Rather than about 1596, as Hermann Isaac suggests.

[3] It would be very desirable that Shakespeare's graphic delineation in the Sonnets should be compared with a coloured portrait of Mrs. Fitton, if such could be found, and could be adequately certified. Portraits of other members of the family, father, mother, brother, or sister, would be of less value. There was, and probably is, in existence a portrait of Mrs. Fitton's great-uncle. But this could scarcely give conclusive evidence. Mr. George Scharf, Director of the National Portrait Gallery (to whom, at the commencement of the inquiry, I was greatly indebted for suggesting that Elizabeth had a maid of honour named *Fytton*, and not *Lytton*, as given in the Calendar of State Papers), directed my attention to the picture, tolerably well known through engravings, which he identified (*Arch. Journ.*, vol. xxiii. p. 131) as representing Elizabeth going in procession to the wedding at Blackfriars. He thought it possible that Mrs. Fitton might be depicted as one of the ladies in a group behind the Queen. But it seems doubtful whether Mrs. Fitton would be represented at all. The picture would most likely occupy several months in its execution. There-

1597, supposing Christmas of that year to be the time when *Love's Labour's Lost* was acted before the Queen? The Rev. W. A. Harrison, to whom this inquiry has been so often indebted, discovered (Harl. MS. 1984, f. 146b) a pedigree with the entry,—

"Mary ffitton
Maid of honor
to Queene Eliza,
1595."

Mary Fitton was baptized at Gawsworth, June 24, 1578 so that we may take her age as being seventeen in 1595.[1] She may thus very well have seen *Love's Labour's Lost*, if acted before the Court at the Christmas of 1597.[2]

With respect to the identification with Mrs. Fitton, it is not unimportant to observe that, apparently, the dark lady of

fore—whatever may have been the original intention—it seems doubtful whether, after the affair of March 1601, the Queen would allow either Mrs. Fitton or Herbert to appear.

[1] According to the version of 138 in the *Passionate Pilgrim* (ninth line), the dark lady falsely declared herself to be young. But elsewhere, even in 130 and 150, there is no indication of her being other than young; and this indeed seems implied in such expressions as "pretty ruth," "pretty looks," "lips that Love's own hand did make." And Shakespeare's pretending to be youthful also implies that the lady was young. It is possible that Jaggard printed 138 from an inaccurate copy (cf. some remarks by Dowden, Introd. to facsimile of *Passionate Pilgrim*, p. vii.). Perhaps, however, it is more likely that some one altered the last six lines to conceal Mrs. Fitton, who, in 1599, was in high favour at Court.

[2] There are, moreover, grounds for thinking that the Rosaline of *Love's Labour's Lost* was originally conceived of by Shakespeare as *pale* with black eyes—"A whitely wanton with a velvet brow, with two pitch balls stuck in her face for eyes," (Act iii. ll. 198, 199). One reason for this opinion is, that in Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet* there was also a Rosaline, and she is "white" and "pale" and with "black eyes" (Act ii. sc. 4, ll. 4, 14). For some reason or other Shakespeare seems to have associated these characteristics with the name of Rosaline. But Rosaline of *Love's Labour's Lost*, Act iv. sc. 3, is not white and pale, but of a remarkably dark complexion. The inconsistency is, however, accounted for, if we suppose that the features originally given were changed, when the play was revised, so as to agree with the characteristics of Mrs. Fitton.

the Sonnets, notwithstanding her close relations with Shakespeare, did not reside with him. That she was not living with the poet at the time to which 144 refers comes out pretty clearly :—

> " But being both from me, both to each friend,
> I guess one angel in another's hell :
> Yet this shall I ne'er know, but live in doubt
> Till my bad angel fire my good one out." [1]

And, if the reference is to Mrs. Fitton, we can easily understand that she, as one of the Queen's maids of honour, could not have resided with Shakespeare.

Can we, in the Sonnets, detect any allusion to the name "Fitton," a name which, in Elizabethan English, might be played upon as equivalent to "fit one"? In reply it may be said that Shakespeare, after alluding to the lady's name ("thy name," 151, line 9), speaks of her as pointed out for his "triumphant prize;" a statement easy to account for if her name was understood in the way just mentioned, if she was *the fit one*. According to the ideas of our own day this may seem at first sight somewhat overstrained. But sufficient evidence that such is not the case is furnished by a monument at Gawsworth, in Cheshire, the former abode of the Fittons. This monument, which was erected by the Lady Anne Fitton, Mrs. Mary Fitton's sister-in-law, has an inscribed tablet concluding with the lines :—

> " Whose sovle's and body's beavties sentence them
> FITTONS, to weare a heavenly Diadem."
> (EARWAKER'S *East Cheshire*, vol. ii. p. 583).

It is thus seen that such a play on the name as I have suggested is far from being an improbable and extravagant conceit.[2]

[1] If 134 is to be taken as resting on a basis of fact, it would seem that it was on some business of Shakespeare's that Herbert first went to the lady. Possibly he went to see Mrs. Fitton as a friend of Shakespeare.

[2] Having regard to the whole of this 151st Sonnet, it is not very difficult to see that there might be a play on the name in a special sense. And

In the last Sonnet of the second series—a Sonnet closely connected with that immediately preceding — there are biographical allusions of some difficulty, but of great importance with respect to the identification of Mrs. Mary Fitton with the dark lady of the Sonnets:—

> "In loving thee thou know'st I am forsworn,
> *But thou art twice forsworn*, to me love swearing,
> *In act thy bed-vow broke*, and new faith torn
> In vowing new hate after new love bearing" (152, lines 1 to 4).

The expression "in act," at the commencement of the third line, will be noticed more particularly directly. It may be sufficient here to observe generally that the lady having charged Shakespeare with unfaithfulness to another, he replies with a *tu quoque*. Mrs. Fitton comes before us as maid of honour to Queen Elizabeth, bearing suitably to the office her maiden name: what do we know as to any conjugal relations which she formed? The Rev. Frederick C. Fitton, late Rector of Laverstoke, Hants, in a communication which he sent to me shortly before his death, stated that he had in his possession a pedigree of the Fitton family, copied by his father (who was born in 1779) from a MS. by Ormerod, author of the *History of Cheshire*, containing the entry,—

"Capt. Lougher	=	Mary Fitton	=	Capt. Polwhele
1st husband.		maid of honour, had one bastard by Wm. E. of Pembroke, & two bastards by Sir Richard Leveson, Kt."		2nd husband.

The authority given for this entry was "Sir P. L.'s MSS.," meaning certainly the MSS. of Sir Peter Leycester, who was born in 1613, and died in 1678. The approximate date of Mrs. Fitton's marriage with Captain or Mr. Polwhele (thus given as her second husband) was 1607. The

with reference to this sense the use of "fit" and "fitness" in *Cymbeline* iv. 1 should especially be compared.

question then suggests itself, Was she married to Lougher in early youth, previous to 1595, the year when it would seem, according to evidence previously given, she became maid of honour to the Queen? So far as age is concerned, this in Elizabethan times might quite possibly have been the case. Still, there is a difficulty presented by the fact of Mrs. Fitton's being subsequently maid of honour to Elizabeth, and bearing her maiden name. If she had been previously married it would seem that she must have been divorced, or the marriage must have been regarded as null and void. Having regard to the age of the lady, the latter would seem the more probable alternative. But in this latter case would the marriage be entitled to registration in a genealogy? or would the male person concerned be rightly designated as "husband," at least without comment or explanation? A communication recently (1888) made by Lord De Tabley[1] casts a somewhat new light on Ormerod's entry. After research in the MSS. of his ancestor Sir Peter Leycester, Lord De Tabley asserts that Sir Peter registered Polwhele as Mrs. Fitton's first husband and Lougher as the second, and also that the additional facts were given that the bastard by the Earl of Pembroke was a son (cf. *supra*, p. 57), and that the two bastards were daughters. It appears thus, either that Ormerod made a mistake, or that, relying on some other MS., or influenced by some other cause, he purposely deviated from the

[1] To the Rev. W. A. Harrison. According to an extract made by Lord De Tabley from "a very large (elephant) folio of Cheshire genealogies with coloured arms," Mrs. Fitton's relations to her two husbands stand thus:—

Sir Edward ffitton of Gawesworth

†	†	
This Mary ffitton had by Will, Herbert Earle of Pembrooke a bastard and also by Sir Richard Lusan she had two bastard-daughters.	Captaine Lougher 2 husb: = Mary ffitton mayd of honour = Captaine Polewheele 1. husband	

genealogy to which Lord De Tabley refers. For the present, however, it appears safest to reverse the order given by Ormerod, and to take Lougher as the second husband and Polwhele as the first, though this course is certainly not free from difficulty.

The date of Mrs. Fitton's marriage with Captain or Mr. Polwhele can be ascertained with sufficient accuracy. The will of Mrs. Fitton's father is dated 4 March 1604 [1605], and in it he bequeaths to his daughter the Lady Anne Newdigate a bowl or piece of plate of silver of the value of £6. 13s. 4d., "wth myne armes in colours thereuppon. And these words vnder them, 'The guift of S^{r} Edward Fytton,'" and a like bowl with arms and inscription to "my daughter Mary Fytton." At this time, then, Mary Fitton still bore her maiden name. The will of her great-uncle Francis Fitton bears date three years subsequently, 31st March 1608. In it he bequeathed to "M^{r}. William Pollewheele, who married with my nece M^{ris} Marie Fitton younger daughter to Sir Edward Fitton knt. deceased my nephew before in these named my usual riding sword being damasked commonly called a fauchion and my best horse or gelding of mine to his owne best liking as a remembrance and token of my love to him and to his now wief."[1] The expression "his *now* wife" may be taken as implying a recent marriage. This, as already stated, may be placed approximately in 1607, when Mrs. Fitton would be in her twenty-ninth or thirtieth year, a somewhat late age considering her temperament and the usages of the times. But when did she have the two bastard daughters by Sir Richard Leveson? Did this occur in the years between 1601 and 1607? If this was so, how came it about that she stood so well with her father and with her great-uncle?

[1] For information with regard to these wills I am indebted to particulars kindly communicated to the Rev. W. A. Harrison by Mr. J. P. Earwaker, author of the history of *East Cheshire*.

And how could Polwhele persuade himself to marry her? Or if Polwhele died after a comparatively short interval, and the *liaison* with Leveson was subsequently formed, then there will remain some difficulty as to the marriage with Lougher. Are we to look for an explanation to Mrs. Fitton's tact and "warrantise of skill"? (Sonnet 150).

But, whether with Lougher or with some other person, letters in Lord Salisbury's collection give evidence tending to the conclusion that there had been prior to 1599 an actual marriage, or what might be considered as such. On January 29, 1599, Mrs. Fitton's father writes to Sir R. Cecil:—

"Good M^{r}. Secretary help yo^{r} poore clyent my daughter to her porçon w^{ch} thus longe hath rested in S^{r} Henry Wallop's hands, yf it might please yo^{u} but to send for M^{r} Wallop to yo^{u} and demand of him whether he haue not good discharge for the same, and such discharge as M^{r} Tresorer his father him selfe layde downe yo^{r} honor shold then know his answer, and see his euasions: by this yo^{r} honor byndeth vs both and without this I shalbe much distressed or els my poore daughter hindred, To yo^{r} Lo protection therfore do I comend the cause and her that it doth concerne."

It thus appears that Mrs. Fitton's marriage-portion had remained for a good while in the hands of Sir Henry Wallop, the Irish Treasurer, objection being made to paying it over to the lady, on the ground of the discharge not being a good one. This is entirely in accordance with the supposition that there was, or was alleged to be, some person in the background who might possibly come forward and claim the money on the ground of his having been married to Mrs. Fitton.

The claim was destined, however, to remain still for a considerable time unsatisfied. In a letter of Fitton's to Cecil (August 5, 1600) he says that, in order to have them duly allowed, he has sent to Ireland his Bills for £1200,

which he has assigned to his daughter Mary; and he adds, "I now eftsoones besech yo^{r} hono^{r} to stande good to her and further that S^{r} Henry Wallop may give her her dues." This £1200 can scarcely be an additional sum.

Supposing that Mrs. Fitton had been married in early youth, and that the marriage had been made out to be illegal and null and void, either on the ground that the previous consent of parents had not been obtained, or from some other cause,[1] we can easily see that a plausible objection might be made to paying over to her her marriage-portion. Mrs. Martin's statement about priests marrying

[1] As to the setting aside in Elizabethan times of a marriage deemed undesirable, the following quotation from a letter from Sir Robert Cecil to Sir George Carew (June 24, 1602) may be adduced:—"He (*i.e.*, Sir Edward More's son) hath been very lewdly enticed to entangle himself with the daughter of Arthur Milles, by whom he hath no other portion but of suspected fame, her breeding (as it is said) being far from any good discipline. This accident having wounded the father, who had fixed his especial care upon him, makes him desirous by all means possible to remove him from her conversation, to see if it can be possible to make him see his blindness, and be content to further those courses which may be taken to prove the marriage unlawful, whereof they say there be very many just occasions" (*Calendar of Carew MSS.*, 1601–1603, p. 252). In Mrs. Fitton's case a more summary proceeding was probably adopted, the young lady being taken home by her father.

Then, with regard to the consent of parents being required, the following quotation may be made:—"In respect to the Consent of Parents; 'tis said in our Canons that children may not marry without their consent. . . . And marriages that are made contrary to the Consent of Parents are pronounced to be invalid both by the Canon and Civil Law" (Ayliffe, *Parergon Juris Canonici*, p. 362). Moreover, it is of considerable importance that Mary Fitton's elder brother incurred his father's very serious displeasure by marrying without consent. In a letter to Lord Burleigh (MS. Lansd., 71), his mother, Lady Fitton, speaks of her son as "sure to fall into some desperate action, for his father will not yett do any thinge for him." The letter is inscribed "15 May 1592, La. Phytton to my L. interceding with his Lord^{sp} to do something for her son: who hauing married wthout his father's consent was vnder his displeasure." It is not unlikely that Mary Fitton's marriage took place at the same time, but that, on account of her youth—she would be somewhat under fourteen, or about this age—a summary proceeding, such as that above adverted to, was adopted.

gentlewomen at Court (*supra*, p. 57) would seem not only consistent with the supposition that Mrs. Fitton had been married, but also with something having occurred which caused her to think lightly of the marriage-bond. Then as to the dark lady being in a position analogous to that in which we have supposed Mrs. Fitton to be, there is evidence of a remarkable character in the Sonnets themselves. The expression "in act" (152, line 3, "In act thy bed-vow broke," &c.) seems to have been overlooked or misinterpreted. As the words in question are, I suppose, commonly regarded, they are not only superfluous, but they are, moreover, inconsistent with the context; the bed-vow was broken *in act*, when the lady swore to love the poet. If, however (and this is certainly in accordance with Elizabethan usage), we take the words as meaning "in fact," "in reality," a new light is thrown on the passage. There is no necessity for going outside Shakespeare for examples of this usage. A very good example is to be found in a passage towards the end of the first act of Othello, thus given in the First Folio:—

> "For he's embark'd
> With such loud reason to the Cyprus Warres,
> (Which euen now stands in Act) that for their soules
> Another of his Fadome, they haue none,
> To lead their Businesse."

In the third line of this quotation the editors have very commonly changed "stands" into the plural "stand" (cf. note, p. 32), evidently supposing that the reference is to the coming Cyprus wars. This change, however, is in opposition to the ancient authorities; and it may be pronounced, with some confidence, to be wrong. Othello is not yet formally appointed to the chief command in the "Cyprus wars." "But," says Iago, "the appointment is already as good as made; it 'even now stands in act.' The thing is as certain as if he were already 'embark'd;' there is 'such loud reason' for it, the arguments are so cogent; there is

indeed no other man to be found whose ability can equal his." We thus have a very good example of the phrase "in act" being used with the sense above mentioned. And similarly—taking "in act" as equivalent to "in reality," "in fact"—the dark lady had broken her marriage-vow "in act," though she may have alleged that the marriage was set aside, or was treated as null and void, and that legally and formally she had been guilty of no breach. It is worthy of note that there is no indication whatever of a husband as likely to interpose between the lady of the Sonnets and her admirers; and we can easily account for this absence, if the lady was in the position just suggested. And if this was also the position of Mrs. Fitton, it is easy to explain Wallop's pretext or contention that, if he paid over to her the marriage-portion, he would have no "good discharge."

Pembroke's refusal to marry Mrs. Fitton, when, early in 1601, her condition was discovered, and he in consequence was subjected to examination, does not seem to have proceeded mainly, if at all, from her having been previously married. The emphatic words employed, with regard to Pembroke, by Cecil in his letter to Carew (*supra*, p. 56) are very remarkable: he "utterly renounceth all marriage." These words would quite accord with an allegation of unchastity, or of a want of "honesty," using the word "honesty" in the wider Elizabethan sense.[1] This matter is important with regard to what is said of the dark lady in 137 and elsewhere. Moreover, there is in Lord Salisbury's collection a letter from Mrs. Fitton's father, Sir Edward Fitton, to Sir R. Cecil, which conveys the impression that the charge of want of "honesty" had actually been brought against Mrs.

[1] And so also does what is said of Pembroke's "confessing a fact," a confession which by no means necessarily involves an avowal of paternity. Dr. Furnivall suggested a comparison of *Winter's Tale*, Act iii. sc. 2, line 86, and the possibility of "fact" meaning "fault."

Fitton at this time, and had been adduced by Pembroke as a reason for discarding her. The letter bears date May 16 [or 18], 1601, and was written from Stanner (spelt also Staner),[1] where Sir Edward was compelled to stop on account of his daughter's weakness. She must be left there till he returns, probably from Gawsworth or Macclesfield. With regard to Pembroke he says :—

"I can saye nothinge of the Erle but my daughter is confident in her chance before God and wishethe my Lo and she might but meet before in different senes. but for my self I expect no good from hyme that in all this tyme hathe not showed any kindnes, I count my daughter as good a gentlewoman as my Lo is though the dignity of honor [be greater onlye in him] w^{ch} hathe begiled her I ffeare, except my lo^{s} honesty bee the greater vertuoes."

Mrs. Fitton's alleged confidence as to the result of an appearance before a divine tribunal may seem at first somewhat mysterious. Her wish that Pembroke and she, before the last account, may meet in "different scenes" may possibly allude to a still lingering desire for marriage. Her father, on the other hand, entertains no such expectation : he "expects no good from him." Since the affair of now two or three months ago his conduct has not been such as to justify any anticipation of this kind; he has not shown "any kindness." What follows certainly gives some probability to the supposition that Sir Edward has in view the suggested marriage and Pembroke's rejection of any such idea.. In his judgment Mrs. Fitton in point of social status is as good as Pembroke, except, indeed, he allows that the latter is a nobleman, and has such dignity as attaches to a title. Her father is afraid that this has be-

[1] There is a place called Stanner Nab (presumably a hill or eminence) a few miles S.E. of Chester city. If the place intended was situated here, a somewhat circuitous route from London to Gawsworth or Macclesfield must have been taken. But the route adopted was probably chosen for the sake of a more level road.

guiled her, and led her astray. Then follows what is, for our present purpose, a very important, though somewhat ambiguous clause. The meaning may possibly be "unless my Lord's honesty have greater power than his noble rank," or, "unless my Lord's honesty be greater than my daughter's virtues," or, "unless my Lord's honesty be the greatest of his virtues and endowments." But, in any case, the reference to Pembroke's "honesty" is certainly ironical. And, considering the context, it is difficult or impossible to find any other reason for this ironical reference than Pembroke's having refused to marry Mrs. Fitton on the ground of her want of "honesty." With this sense in view it is easy to understand the allusion to the divine tribunal, and to Mrs. Fitton's being "confident in her chance before God." Sir Edward Fitton was not a master of literary or epistolary style, but the construction of this last clause is very peculiar, and so is the spelling of the word "vertuoes"[1] —a mode of spelling remarkable, even in view of the laxity and eccentricity of Elizabethan orthography. The subject was, however, an unpleasant one for Sir Edward; and, probably enough, facts had come to his knowledge which made him feel awkward in alluding to it. Very likely this state of feeling is reflected in the construction and orthography. Though Mrs. Fitton's previous marriage may, quite possibly, have had little or no influence on Pembroke's refusal to marry her, yet it is in every way likely that it had very much to do with the development of her character and conduct, as depicted in the Sonnets and elsewhere.[2]

[1] Mr. R. T. Gunton, Lord Salisbury's librarian, was so kind as to re-examine the MS. with reference to the spelling. If this were alone, however, it might be held to be a mere slip in writing.

[2] It may seem a prosaic view of the renewed association between Shakespeare and Pembroke in 1601 to imagine that one of its causes may have been the testimony which Shakespeare might be able to give, if called upon, with respect to Mrs. Fitton's character. I am, however, far from

The numerous particulars in the Sonnets which thus agree with what we know from other sources concerning Mrs. Fitton make the argument identifying her with the "dark lady" very cogent indeed, even if we have not—what the Dedication to the First Folio gives us in the case of Herbert—direct external testimony to the existence of personal relations between Mrs. Fitton and Shakespeare. On the whole, however, the evidence concerning Mrs. Fitton can scarcely be looked upon as less decisive.

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regarding this view as improbable. The Queen was greatly enraged; and if she had commanded a marriage with Mrs. Fitton, it might have been difficult or impossible to disobey. It would be important for Pembroke to fortify himself against being constrained in this matter contrary to his settled resolve. The letter cited just above shows that the idea of a marriage had not yet quite dropped out of view even in May, more than three months after Pembroke had "utterly renounced all marriage." Sir Edward, however, was in despair; but he was scarcely likely to abandon the project on any slight grounds. We may well believe that he would use on behalf of the matrimonial scheme any influence at Court which he could command.

CHAPTER IX.

SHAKESPEARE'S BELIEF IN THE IMMORTALITY OF HIS WORKS.

It has been said not uncommonly that Shakespeare had no consciousness of his own greatness, and that he did not write with a view to posthumous fame. The alleged proof is, either that he did not publish a collected edition of his plays, or that he published none of them himself, even separately. Assertions of this kind may be sufficiently refuted by a comparison of the separate editions of a single play—*Hamlet*. Whether the *Hamlet* of 1604 was or was not actually published by the authority of Shakespeare, it gives evidence of changes in the text which could have proceeded only from him—changes, moreover, which, on account of their subtlety or special character, were certainly not made chiefly, if at all, with a view to presentation on the stage. The only reasonable conclusion is, that Shakespeare had in view those who would carefully study his work in time to come.[1] That he did not himself collect his plays was a fact connected possibly with the laws of dramatic copyright.

We are not, however, left to decide the question by such inferences as those just mentioned. The Sonnets contain predictions of posthumous fame expressed in terms of the strongest confidence. It has been said that no very particular weight should be assigned to such predictions, since they were

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[1] Changes of the kind adverted to were pointed out in my essay, *The Philosophy of "Hamlet."*

sufficiently common with the Elizabethan poets. And no doubt predictions of this kind are to be found not only in works of the Elizabethan era, but also in those of poets who had lived long ages before. The doubt, however, suggests itself whether, in the whole range of Elizabethan literature—to limit ourselves to that—there can be found, within a compass as narrow as that of these Sonnets, predictions of the writer's literary immortality equally numerous, and expressed in terms of similarly strong confidence. But the poet's verse, it has been justly remarked, is regarded as the means through which his friend is to be held in eternal remembrance. And certainly these predictions lose thereby something of the egotistic character which they would otherwise possess. In one case, indeed, the poet disavows immortality for himself. He himself is to be lost in the common oblivion, while his verse confers on his friend eternal renown :—

> "From hence your memory death cannot take,
> Although in me each part will be forgotten.
> Your name from hence immortal life shall have,
> Though I, once gone, to all the world must die :
> The earth can yield me but a common grave,
> When you entombed in men's eyes shall lie.
> Your monument shall be my gentle verse,
> Which eyes not yet created shall o'er-read ;
> And tongues to be, your being shall rehearse,
> When all the breathers of the world are dead ;
> You still shall live (such virtue hath my pen)
> Where breath most breathes, even in the mouths of men" (81).

This self-abnegation is, of course, a poetical fiction ; but it is perhaps worth considering whether the so frequent assertion of the immortality of his verse may not have had some connection with Shakespeare's social rank being so far inferior to that of his friend. There is no doubt that he felt this inferiority very deeply, and as a reaction from the impression caused by such disesteem, there may have arisen within him a consciousness of his innate dignity. Though his

friend dared not in public acknowledge the acquaintance (36), it was, nevertheless, in the poet's power to confer unique and surpassing honour on that friend. Shakespeare was evidently aware that he held a patent of the very highest nobility.

CHAPTER X.

THE RELIGION OF SHAKESPEARE.

The late Rev. J. R. Green remarked, with reference to Shakespeare's religious belief:—"It is hard indeed to say whether he had any religious belief or no. The religious phrases which are thinly scattered over his works are little more than expressions of a distant and imaginative reverence. But on the deeper grounds of religious faith his silence is significant. He is silent; and the doubt of Hamlet deepens his silence about the afterworld. 'To die,' it may be, was to him as it was to Claudio, 'to go we know not whither.' Often as his questionings turn to the riddle of life and death, he leaves it a riddle to the last, without heeding the common theological solutions around him."[1] It can scarcely, however, be correct to say that Shakespeare did not *heed* any of "the common theological solutions around him," though it may be true that he *accepted* none of them, neither Puritanism, nor Anglicanism, nor Romanism. On account of the peculiar character of the Sonnets, the question as to Shakespeare's religious convictions here acquires a special interest. Questionings as to life and death are abundant; but the evidence to be found in these poems serves but to deepen the conclusion derived from the plays. There are two or three allusions to common theological tenets, which should certainly have all the weight to which they are entitled; but it may be doubted whether these allusions can be regarded as other than conventional,

[1] *History of the English People*, vol. ii. pp. 479, 480.

like the expressions of religious belief in Shakespeare's will, which were probably introduced by a country attorney as forming part of a customary and valid document. As such we may conclude with some probability are—

> "So till the judgment that yourself arise,
> You live in this, and dwell in lovers' eyes" (55);

and

> "Then give me welcome, next my heaven, the best,
> Even to thy pure and most most loving breast" (110).

When he speaks of "precious friends hid in death's dateless night" (30) there is no accompanying expression of hope that they will be restored to him in a future life. Again, the "surly sullen bell" is to announce the poet's departure from the world (71); but he will not then have gone to enjoy the felicity of saints and angels; on the contrary, he will have "fled from this vile world," "to dwell with vilest worms;" to be, "perhaps, compounded with clay." Still more important is 74, where the poet's "spirit," "the better part" of him, is contrasted with his body, consigned to earth, "the prey of worms," "too base to be remembered." But we find that the "spirit," this "better part," is still to live on, not, however, in Hades or Heaven, but *in the verses which he has composed*:—

> "The worth of that (his body) is that which it contains (his spirit),
> And that is this (*his verse*), and this with thee remains."

And here we come again to Shakespeare's expectation of a literary immortality. But this question has been just before discussed.

Mr. C. Armitage Brown, however, asks, with reference to the subject we are now considering,—"Have we nothing in his volume of *Poems* where he willingly expresses his own religious feelings? Yes, one entire Sonnet, and no more, proving his strong faith in the immortality of the soul, and possibly, as a friend has observed, imbued with

arguments from St. Paul. It stands in his *Poems*, Sonnet 146th."[1] I think, however, that a careful consideration of this Sonnet will cause us to question Mr. Brown's view, or possibly we may come to an opposite conclusion:—

"Poor soul, the centre of my sinful earth,
[Why feed'st] these rebel powers that thee array?[2]
Why dost thou pine within, and suffer dearth,
Painting thy outward walls so costly gay?
Why so large cost, having so short a lease,
Dost thou upon thy fading mansion spend?
Shall worms, inheritors of this excess,
Eat up thy charge? Is this thy body's end?
Then, soul, live thou upon thy servant's loss,
And let that pine to aggravate thy store,
Buy terms divine in selling hours of dross;
Within be fed, without be rich no more:
So shalt thou feed on death, that feeds on men,
And, death once dead, there's no more dying then."

If, however, as Mr. Armitage Brown says, this Sonnet stands alone as an expression of religious belief, there is obviously some ground for questioning whether the interpretation which Mr. Brown maintains to be true is the right one. No doubt, on a superficial view, the language employed may seem quite in harmony with such an explanation. But if the Sonnet have this religious significance, then it must mean that Shakespeare contemplated attaining eternal felicity by fasting and bodily mortification, gaining spiritual wealth by the pining of the emaciated body. But the supposition that Shakespeare seriously thought of adopting an ascetic or monastic life is scarcely to be entertained. Moreover, it is of great importance, with regard to the true

[1] *Shakespeare's Autobiographical Poems*, pp. 221, 222.

[2] The Quarto gives:—

"Poore soule the center of my sinfull earth,
My sinfull earth these rebbell powres that thee array," &c.

The repetition of "my sinfull earth" is obviously wrong. "Why feed'st" agrees with the context, and "feed'st" occurs in 1, line 6.

meaning, that though in no other Sonnet is language used precisely identical or parallel, yet the conquest over death is elsewhere spoken of, and is so spoken of *with reference to the immortality of the poet's verse.* Thus, in the 55th Sonnet the friend is assured that through the poet's "powerful rhyme," which will be more enduring than marble or gilded monuments, he will still come fully forth in the gaze of men,—

"'Gainst Death and all oblivious enmity."

Or, again, there is 107, where the poet speaks of Death as "subscribing" to him, as submissive to his power; but still this submission is brought about by the vital force of his literary compositions:—

"Death to me subscribes,
Since spite of him I'll live in this poor rhyme,
While he insults o'er dull and speechless tribes."

Such being the case, it is reasonable to explain in a similar manner the "dying of death" and the "feeding on death" spoken of in the Sonnet we are now more particularly considering. Having in view the attainment of undying fame, the poet summons his powers to the composition of immortal works, even though the strain on the body, the servant of the soul, be such as to shorten life. Immortality is thus to be nourished while the body pines and dies. By an easy and not unprecedented metonymy the dying body is identified with death itself:—

"So shalt thou feed on death, that feeds on men,
And, death once dead, there's no more dying then."

If the reader thinks of the succession of immortal works which followed one another so rapidly from the poet's pen in the first years of the seventeenth century, and also of the fact that he died at the age of fifty-two, it may seem not quite unlikely that a very serious purpose was expressed in this remarkable Sonnet.

It must be maintained, then, that, so far as the Sonnets are concerned, evidence on the whole is wanting of Shakespeare's faith in the tenets of orthodox Christianity. With the Sonnets before us it is doubtful whether we can fairly admit, with due regard for truth, that he regarded the Christian faith with "distant and imaginative reverence." But if this were admitted no further concession could be easily allowed. It is possible, however, to indicate certain theological or philosophical tenets which Shakespeare seems to have regarded with more or less of approval, though obviously the subject requires to be approached with caution and reserve.

CHAPTER XI.

PHILOSOPHY IN THE SONNETS.

Addressing ourselves to the inquiry, then, with all due caution, we shall perhaps find grounds for thinking that Shakespeare accepted, with more or less definiteness, three philosophical doctrines, forming together a system of some completeness:—(1) The doctrine of the *Anima Mundi*, the Soul of the World; (2) the doctrine of Necessity; (3) the doctrine of the Cycles. So far as the Sonnets are concerned there are clear indications of (1) and (3); and the third implies the second. These doctrines, it is true, are not tenets of the Christian faith; but, as Dean Plumptre has justly observed, Shakespeare's philosophy "is not a Christian view of life and death. The ethics of Shakespeare are no more Christian, in any real sense of the word, than those of Sophocles or Goethe."[1]

The first of the doctrines just indicated is obviously contained in Sonnet 107, which speaks of—

> "The prophetic soul
> Of the wide world dreaming on things to come."

These words could scarcely be looked upon as a mere poetical embellishment, even if they stood alone; but this is by no means the fact. We are here concerned mainly with the Sonnets; but the evidence of the Plays may be used as subsidiary and illustrative. Thus, with regard to the "prophetic soul" of the world, may be adduced a remarkable passage in *Richard III.*, Act ii. sc. 3, lines 41–44:—

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[1] *Commentary on Ecclesiastes*, Appendix, "Shakespeare and Koheleth."

> "Before the days of change, still is it so;
> By a divine instinct men's minds mistrust
> Ensuing danger; as, by proof, we see
> The water swell before a boist'rous storm."

Shakespeare has been regarded as having borrowed here from Holinshed, who says—"Before such great things, men's hearts of a secret instinct of nature misgive them, as the sea without wind swelleth of himself some time before a tempest." And a connection has been suggested with St. Luke xxi. 25, 26, where the Evangelist speaks of "the sea and the waves roaring; men's hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth." Such allusion and suggestion are probable enough; but it is observable that the "secret instinct of nature," of which Holinshed speaks, has been transformed into a "divine instinct" by Shakespeare, the latter expression being obviously a closer approach towards "the wide world's prophetic soul" as spoken of in the Sonnet. In this connection may also be remembered the various instances of forebodings to be found in Shakespeare, as well as the dreams and apparitions which come as precursors of following evils. There are in *Hamlet* notable examples. In relation to the "grand commission" of Rosencrantz and Guildenstern, and the embassy to England, there was in Hamlet's heart "a kind of fighting that would not let him sleep" (Act v. sc. 2). Similarly, when the hour for the final catastrophe has come, he says, "Thou wouldst not think how ill all's here about my heart; but it is no matter." "It is but foolery; but it is such a kind of gain-giving as would perhaps trouble a woman" (*Ibid.*). These and the like we may take as instances of "the prophetic soul of the world" speaking in and through the individual; and, so far as Hamlet himself is concerned, such indications are accordant also with the fact that he is the creature of destiny, kept back by an invisible restraint, and able to act only when his "fate cries out," or otherwise

gives the sign and scope for action. It would be easy to derive illustration, in like manner, from Macbeth, who also appears as the puppet of the invisible. But, passing this by, the reader's attention may be called to a very noteworthy passage in the Second Part of *Henry IV.*, Act iii. sc. 1, line 45 *seq.* Here, moreover, the doctrine of the cycles and the necessary sequence of events in the world comes before us together with that of the foreboding of the prophetic soul:—

> "*K. Hen.* O God! that one might read the book of fate,
> And see the revolution of the times
> Make mountains level, and the continent,
> Weary of solid firmness, melt itself
> Into the sea! and, other times, to see
> The beachy girdle of the ocean
> Too wide for Neptune's hips; how chances mock,
> And changes fill the cup of alteration
> With divers liquors. O, if this were seen,
> The happiest youth, viewing his progress through,
> What perils past, what crosses to ensue,
> Would shut the book, and sit him down and die."

King Henry then relates that ten years had not passed since his predecessor, Richard, and the Earl of Northumberland were, in fullest friendship, feasting together. Two years later Northumberland had become the bosom friend of Henry himself, having fallen out with Richard, "giving him defiance." Then Henry tells how Richard had made a certain prophetic speech:—

> "'Northumberland, thou ladder, by the which
> My cousin Bolingbroke ascends my throne;'
> Though then, Heaven knows, I had no such intent;
> But that necessity so bow'd the state,
> That I and greatness were compelled to kiss:—
> 'The time shall come'—thus did he follow it—
> 'The time will come that foul sin, gathering head,
> Shall break into corruption'—so went on,
> Foretelling this same time's condition
> And the division of our amity."

The Earl of Warwick replies that the lives of men repeat

what has happened before, and that, in this way, if a man knows the past, he may make a "perfect guess" as to the future. The passage expresses the doctrine of the cycles, and is extremely interesting with reference to the Sonnets in which this doctrine is set forth with even greater clearness :—

> "*War.* There is a history in all men's lives,
> Figuring the nature of the times deceased,
> The which observed, a man may prophesy,
> With a near aim, of the main chance of things
> As yet not come to life, which in their seeds
> And weak beginnings lie intreasured.
> Such things become the hatch and brood of time ;
> And, by the necessary form of this,
> King Richard might create a perfect guess,
> That great Northumberland, then false to him,
> Would, of that seed, grow to a greater falseness ;
> Which should not find a ground to root upon,
> Unless of you.
> *K. Hen.* Are these things then necessities ?
> Then let us meet them like necessities."

The king, it will be seen, takes what is said as involving a necessary sequence of things, the doctrine of necessity being, as already observed, implied in that of the cycles. In order, however, that the full force of the passage may be recognised, it is desirable to take into account what precedes. The king has been unable to sleep. He is greatly troubled by despatches which have been received, giving evidence of sedition and corruption in the state, and he is in anxious perplexity as to the future. That, under such circumstances, he should desire to "read the book of fate" is not surprising. But one might have thought that his attention would have been directed to the vicissitudes of state affairs, the chances of war, and the calamities by which kings have been overthrown. Instead of this, however, he speaks of changes in the physical structure of the world, the levelling of mountains, the shrinking back of ocean, and the melting of the firm and solid continent.

The reference to human affairs is quite subordinate.[1] For this fact it is difficult to account, unless it was the poet's intention to represent man and his affairs as governed by the same laws and as expressive of the same forces as those which control the sea and mould the form of the land. And this view of the matter, it will be seen, is entirely in accordance with the way in which the words "necessity" and "necessary" are employed—"the *necessary* form of this:"—

> "Are these things then necessities?
> Then let us meet them like necessities."

The passage just quoted, which speaks of "a history in all men's lives, figuring the nature of the times deceased," was written, perhaps, some short time before Sonnet 59,[2] which expresses the doctrine of the cycles with great clearness, though hypothetically:—

> "If there be nothing new, but that which is
> Hath been before, how are our brains beguil'd,
> Which, labouring for invention, bear amiss
> The second burthen of a former child.
> O, that record could with a backward look,
> Even of five hundred courses of the sun,
> Show me your image in some antique book
> Since mind at first in character was done!
> That I might see what the old world could say
> To this composed wonder of your frame;
> Whether we are mended, or whe'r better they,
> Or whether revolution be the same."

It will be seen that here the idea is not simply that the lives of men "figure the nature of the times deceased," but the absence of anything really new is supposed, so that even

[1] A fact which is made especially conspicuous in the Folio, where the words from "O, if this were seen" to "sit him down and die" are omitted.

[2] The date of the writing, or completing, of 2 Henry IV. is, however, doubtful. But as the First Quarto did not appear till 1600, it is quite possible that the passage above cited may have been written about the same time as Sonnet 59.

the brain itself, "labouring for invention," can but produce again what it has formerly brought forth. What follows as to "five hundred courses of the sun" would seem to point to pre-existence in this, rather than in some former world. And here it is worthy to be observed that when Shakespeare was thus contemplating the course of things, the idea of an ocean of being seems to have presented itself to his mind; and such an idea is in accordance with what is said in the passage quoted from 2 Henry IV. about the ocean and its "beachy girdle." Sonnet 60 commences:—

> "Like as the waves make towards the pebbled shore,
> So do our minutes hasten to their end;
> Each changing place with that which goes before,
> In sequent toil all forwards do contend.
> Nativity, once in the main of light,
> Crawls to maturity," &c.

The analogy thus brought out seems well deserving of attention. Whether the idea of an ocean was suggested by what Holinshed says of men's hearts being moved like the waves of the sea (*supra*, p. 102), it is not necessary to determine. The conception underlying the words "the main of light" is probably that of a great breadth of ocean illumined by the sun, though in the sequel the metaphor is changed.

In Sonnet 123, which was probably written a year and a half or two years after 59, the doctrine of the cycles is stated definitely and without hypothesis:—

> "No, Time, thou shalt not boast that I do change:
> Thy pyramids built up with newer might
> To me are nothing novel, nothing strange;
> They are but dressings of a former sight.
> Our dates are brief, and therefore we admire
> What thou dost foist upon us that is old;
> And rather make them born to our desire
> Than think that we before have heard them told."

The expression "thy pyramids"—that is, the "pyramids" of Time—is manifestly figurative, denoting what is extra-

ordinary and stupendous. But if such things are "nothing novel," "nothing strange," mere dressings up again of a "former sight," it would seem that a previous state of existence precisely resembling the present must be implied. And thus we have more fully before us the doctrine of the cycles.

Here, however, the question presents itself, Were the doctrines of the soul of the world, and of the cycles, as expressed in the Sonnets, the result merely of Shakespeare's reflection? If not, from what sources did he derive them? With respect to the *anima mundi*, the soul of the world, the difficulty is not great. This was a doctrine prominent in the teaching of Giordano Bruno, who suffered martyrdom in the year 1600, that is, a little before Sonnet 107 was written. Moreover, Bruno had been in England between 1583 and 1585, and had come into contact with Sir Philip Sidney, William Herbert's uncle, so that an allusion to Bruno's doctrine is in no way unaccountable.[1] There is also another contemporary of Shakespeare who should here be mentioned, Tommaso Campanella, who entertained opinions similar to those of Bruno with regard to the world as an animated being. In a Sonnet of his on "The World as an Animal" (*Il mondo è un animal*) he says, as translated by Mr. J. A. Symonds:—

> "Again, the earth is a great animal,
> Within the greatest; we are like the lice
> Upon its body, doing harm as they."

[1] In the *Shakespeare Jahrbuch*, vol. xi. p. 91, there is an article by W. König on "Shakespeare und Giordano Bruno." The writer of this article, after adducing various instances in Shakespeare of analogy with Bruno's doctrines of greater or less probability, strangely denies that there is any point of connection between Shakespeare and Bruno's doctrine of an all-pervading world-soul:—"Sein Glaube äussert sich bald in einer gewissen Gotttrunkenheit, bald in einer Art Pantheismus, da er eine Alles durchdringende Welt-Seele annahm. Auf diesem ganzen Gebiete zeigt sich bei Shakespeare nicht die mindeste Berührung mit Bruno." Had the writer of this article never read Sonnet 107?

Bruno and Campanella were not the first propounders of similar doctrine; but for our present purpose it is not necessary to go back to a more remote antiquity.

With regard to the doctrine of the cycles, the difficulty is perhaps greater; though here again some points of correspondence in the writings of Bruno and Campanella might possibly be detected. But the doctrine, as it appears in the 59th and 123rd Sonnets, was the doctrine of the ancient Stoics, which was reproduced by the author of the Biblical book of Ecclesiastes.[1] Dean Plumptre, however, has said that Shakespeare's acquaintance with the Bible generally does not seem to have been very extensive, and about Ecclesiastes in particular he probably knew but little. And he proceeds:—"We have to deal accordingly with the phenomena of parallelism, and not of derivation. But the parallelism is, it will be admitted, sufficiently suggestive. Does Koheleth teach that 'there is nothing new under the sun,' that 'if there is anything whereof it may be said, See this is new, it hath been already of old time which was before us' (Eccles. i. 10), Shakespeare writes, 'No, Time, thou shalt not boast that I do change,'" &c.[2] I should, however, certainly be inclined to doubt whether Shakespeare had paid so little attention to the Bible as Dean Plumptre seems to think. But even if this were so generally, the verses in the first chapter of Ecclesiastes which contain the doctrine of the cycles are so salient and prominent, and lend themselves so easily to quotation, that I cannot readily allow the improbability of Shakespeare's having obtained his knowledge from this source. Shakespeare does not speak of the doctrine as derived from his own reflection, but rather as an hypothesis received from

[1] See the present writer's *Ecclesiastes: a Contribution to its Interpretation*, p. 14.

[2] *Commentary on Ecclesiastes*, Appendix, "Shakespeare and Koheleth," p. 232.

without or heard from others: "*If* there be nothing new," &c.[1]

The doctrine of an unchanging succession, involving, as it does, the impossibility of permanent progress, not unnaturally connects itself with a pessimistic view of life. Such a view appears in Ecclesiastes: and in these Sonnets not only is there a widely pervading tone of melancholy, but the poet cries out for death:—

> "Tired with all these, for restful death I cry."
>
> "Tired with all these, from these would I be gone,
> Save that, to die, I leave my love alone."

[1] Professor Arber directed my attention to William Baldwin's *Moral Philosophy* (1596, *et al.*) as possibly influential with Shakespeare. This work, which consists of extracts, has the dictum, "There is no new thing in this world," with the name of Aristotle appended. And it is said of Pythagoras that, "being asked what new thing was in the world, he answered, Nothing." If there are other analogous allusions, they have escaped my notice.

CHAPTER XII.

FURTHER PARTICULARS IN SHAKESPEARE'S BIOGRAPHY.

IMPORTANT facts in relation to Shakespeare's life have been already considered. The biographical materials presented by the Sonnets have been, however, by no means exhausted, as may be seen in this and subsequent sections. A few particulars may be here grouped together.

§ 1. *Allusions to Advancing Age.*—In certain of the Sonnets Shakespeare speaks of his age as already advanced, or even as declining, though, according to the conclusions before expressed, he would be, when the Sonnets in question were written, but about thirty-four or thirty-five. We may take as an example 73, in which, though with beautiful imagery, the feeling of age is very strongly expressed :—

> "That time of year thou may'st in me behold
> When yellow leaves, or none, or few, do hang
> Upon those boughs which shake against the cold
> Bare ruin'd choirs, where late the sweet birds sang.
> In me thou see'st the twilight of such day
> As after sunset fadeth in the west,
> Which by-and-by black night doth take away,
> Death's second self, that seals up all in rest.
> In me thou see'st the glowing of such fire,
> That on the ashes of his youth doth lie,
> As the death-bed whereon it must expire,
> Consum'd with that which it was nourish'd by.
> This thou perceiv'st, which makes thy love more strong
> To love that well which thou must leave ere long."

Certainly, at first sight, such language as this would seem inconsistent with the poet's having attained only the age mentioned above. I am not very willing to accept the

explanation that, on account of difference in the conditions of life, the signs of age made their appearance sooner three centuries ago than they do now. It is more to the purpose that, as compared with the age of Herbert at eighteen ("the world's fresh ornament, and only herald to the gaudy spring" (1), in "the lovely April" of his prime (3)), not only was forty (2), but even thirty-four or thirty-five a somewhat advanced age. This comparison, expressed or implied, should be kept in view, and we should certainly not lose sight of the hue of melancholy which is so clearly conspicuous in many of the Sonnets between 64 and 94. A melancholic tendency would have an important effect on such exaggeration of age as appears in 73 and elsewhere. Drayton, as already mentioned, in his *Idea*, when only some thirty-six years of age, speaks of himself as already aged (*supra*, p. 41). This, however, may be accounted for on the supposition that Drayton was imitating Shakespeare. But such imitation is consistent only with the position that Shakespeare was in fact but thirty-four or thirty-five years old when 73 and other Sonnets were written, as the date of Drayton's *Idea* would fix the date before which these Sonnets, or some of them, must have been composed. The two following stanzas from Lord Byron's poem written on the completion of his thirty-sixth year are in some respects more important, since it is in no way probable that they were written in conscious imitation of Shakespeare:—

"My days are in the yellow leaf,
The flowers and fruits of love are gone;
The worm, the canker, and the grief
Are mine alone.

"The fire that on my bosom preys
Is lone as some volcanic isle;
No torch is kindled at its blaze,—
A funeral pile."

Here we may see again, as in 73, the yellow leaf, the boughs without flower or fruit, the solitary and smothered

fire, while the "death-bed" is replaced by the funeral pile. The objection that Shakespeare could not, at thirty-five, have written seriously as he did write in the Sonnets, is thus seen to be without weight. Of course, it is *possible* that Shakespeare may have become in appearance prematurely aged; but for the interpretation of 73, &c., it is not necessary to affirm this as even probable.

§ 2. *Shakespeare Travelling.* — In the Sonnets from 43 to 52 we have several interesting glimpses of Shakespeare preparing for and travelling on a journey, probably together with his company, towards some provincial towns. At his London residence he leaves behind him no one in whom he can place implicit confidence. All his valuables must be locked up and secured from depredators :—

> "How careful was I, when I took my way,
> Each trifle under truest bars to thrust,
> That, to my use, it might unusèd stay
> From hands of falsehood, in sure wards of trust!" (48).

As to the means of conveyance, not only was the railway, with its iron horse, more than two centuries in the future : even the stage-coach was not yet. The Lord Chamberlain's company did not travel perhaps, as Hamlet gives it, "each actor on his ass," but each on a steed hired possibly for the road to the next important town. Shakespeare cannot leave London and his valuable young friend without some misgivings. And the sorry hack he has hired seems almost to share his rider's unwillingness to leave London behind. He knows nothing of swiftness, even when urged on by the spur :—

> "How heavy do I journey on the way
> When what I seek—my weary travel's end—
> Doth teach that ease and that repose to say,
> 'Thus far the miles are measured from thy friend!'
> The beast that bears me, tired with my woe,
> Plods dully on, to bear that weight in me,
> As if by some instinct the wretch did know
> His rider lov'd not speed, being made from thee :

> The bloody spur cannot provoke him on,
> That sometimes anger thrusts into his hide,
> Which heavily he answers with a groan,
> More sharp to me than spurring to his side:
> For that same groan doth put this in my mind,
> My grief lies onward, and my joy behind" (50).

If he puts up for the night at an inn, besides such entertainment as his host and hostess may provide, he has carried with him the materials for another feast in a miniature portrait of his friend. This being drawn forth, his eye invites his heart to "the painted banquet" (47), and his thoughts "present-absent" go "in tender embassy of love" (45),—

> "Or, if they sleep, thy picture in my sight
> Awakes my heart to heart's and eye's delight" (47).

§ 3. *Shakespeare's Dislike of the Dramatic Profession.*— That Shakespeare should have expressed a dislike for the dramatic profession and its surroundings has been looked upon as scarcely credible, and yet this is a matter on which the Sonnets leave no room for doubt. Here mention must be especially made of Sonnet 111:—

> "O, for my sake do you with Fortune chide,
> The guilty goddess of my harmful deeds,
> That did not better for my life provide
> Than public means, which public manners breeds.
> Thence comes it that my name receives a brand,
> And almost thence my nature is subdued
> To what it works in, like the dyer's hand."

It thus appears that to Shakespeare the associations and circumstances of the theatre seemed debasing. And this feeling might well be deepened by intimacy with a young nobleman of so high rank as William Herbert. With the sensitiveness of his poetic nature, Shakespeare could not but deeply feel his being looked upon as so mean a person that social usage would not allow his dearest friend to recognise the acquaintance in public:—

> " Which, though it alter not love's sole effect,
> Yet doth it steal sweet hours from love's delight.
> I may not ever more acknowledge thee
> Lest my bewailed guilt should do thee shame;
> Nor thou with public kindness honour me,
> Unless thou take that honour from thy name " (36).

Sonnet 37, which speaks of Shakespeare's being "made lame" by the "spite" of Fortune, stands in close connection with 36. Accordingly, it seems to me that Shakespeare's lameness is to be taken figuratively of social disqualification through lack of fortune, and through his consequently following an occupation looked upon as degrading. I should not even think it likely that Shakespeare had become temporarily lame as the result of an accident. Shakespeare's dislike of the dramatic profession requires, however, to be considered in connection with the matter treated of in the next chapter; though, at the same time, we should not disregard the view of the actor's calling given in *Hamlet* (Act iii. sc. 2, lines 18–39).

CHAPTER XIII.

THE SCANDAL CONCERNING SHAKESPEARE IN 1601.

In the series of Sonnets 100 to 126 there are allusions to some scandal which, at the time when these Sonnets were written, was in circulation with regard to Shakespeare. This scandal is not to be confounded with the generally low social esteem of players, though it was in some manner connected with Shakespeare's dramatic engagements. Such a connection is indicated by what is said in 111 of Fortune, "the guilty goddess," having made so ill provision for the poet's wants that he was compelled to depend on "public means." From this dependence resulted "public manners" and the branding of the poet's name. A similar inference is to be drawn from 110, where Shakespeare speaks of having "gone here and there," and made himself look like "a motley," though possibly he had not actually played in "a suit of motley" the part of the Fool:—

> "Alas, 'tis true, I have gone here and there,
> And made myself a motley to the view,
> Gored mine own thoughts, sold cheap what is most dear,
> Made old offences of affections new."

How deeply Shakespeare felt the scandal is shown by the first two lines of 112, where he speaks of his forehead as though branded or stamped thereby:—

> "Your love and pity doth the impression fill
> Which vulgar scandal stamp'd upon my brow."

The great difficulty in the way of supposing that the reference is merely to the stage and acting is presented by the

remarkable language of Sonnet 121, from which it appears that the scandal had some relation to Shakespeare's moral character :—

> "'Tis better to be vile than vile esteem'd,
> When not to be receives reproach of being,
> And the just pleasure lost, which is so deem'd
> Not by our feeling, but by others' seeing.
> For why should others' false *adulterate eyes*
> Give salutation to *my sportive blood?*
> Or on *my frailties* why are frailer spies,
> Which in their wills count bad what I think good?
> No—I am that I am ; and they that level
> At *my abuses*, reckon up their own :
> I may be straight, though they themselves be bevel ;
> By their *rank thoughts* my deeds must not be shown ;
> Unless this general evil they maintain,—
> All men are bad, and in their badness reign."

The expressions here printed in italics, taken together, can scarcely leave a doubt as to the general nature of the matter alluded to. These expressions are incompatible with the supposition that the scandal proceeded merely from the low esteem in which players were held. Shakespeare does not deny that there was some foundation for the scandal. He pleads, however, that his failings had been exaggerated, and that his accusers were worse than himself.

A complete explanation of this scandal it may now be impossible to attain, but, bearing in mind the date, 1601, to which chronological indications require us to refer the Sonnets just cited, we can see evidence of conditions out of which scandal might very easily grow. With regard to Shakespeare's moral character and reputation, the facts to which the Sonnets themselves relate must, of course, be taken into account. There is, besides, contemporary evidence coming very close indeed to the time with which we are now concerned. This evidence may, perhaps, be considered slight ; possibly it may not be strictly and literally true, but, nevertheless, since it comes from a contemporary source, it must not be too hastily put aside. I allude to

the tolerably well-known story concerning Shakespeare, Burbage, and a lady-citizen who so much admired the latter's impersonation of Richard the Third that she invited him to visit her after the play, and to the trick which Shakespeare in consequence played off. This story (or piece of scandal, if it be such) is told in John Manningham's Diary, with the date 13th March 1601[–2].[1] With this story in view it is not difficult to understand how more serious scandal of a somewhat similar nature may have arisen.

Another piece of evidence of about the same date is entitled possibly to greater attention. This is to be found in "*The Returne from Pernassus: or the Scourge of Simony.* Publiquely acted by the Students in Saint Johns Colledge in Cambridge." In Act iv. sc. 3 Shakespeare's colleagues Burbage and Kemp are introduced. The latter makes a reference to Shakespeare which has been repeatedly quoted: —"Few of the vniuersity [men] pen plaies well, they smell too much of that writer *Ouid*, and that writer *Metamorphosis*, and talke too much of *Proserpina & Iuppiter*. Why heres our fellow *Shakespeare* puts them all downe, I and *Ben Ionson* too. O that *Ben Ionson* is a pestilent fellow, he brought vp *Horace* giuing the Poets a pill, but our fellow *Shakespeare* hath giuen him a purge that made him beray his credit."[2] The date of the production of the play from which this extract is given has been fixed as December 1601.[3]

[1] "Vpon a tyme when Burbidge played Richard III. there was a citizen grone soe farr in liking with him, that before shee went from the play shee appointed him to come that night vnto hir by the name of Richard the Third. Shakespeare ouerhearing their conclusion went before, was ntertained and at his game ere Burbidge came. Then message being brought that Richard the Third was at the dore, Shakespeare caused returne to be made that William the Conqueror was before Richard the Third. Shakespeare's name William (*Mr. Touse?*)."—Camden Society's edition by Bruce, p. 39.

[2] Macray's *Pilgrimage to Pernassus*, p. 138.

[3] The date "has been proved from internal evidence (see Professor Arber's Introduction to his reprint) to be December, 1601," Macray's Preface, p. viii. But *about* this date is sufficient for us here.

In 1601 there was in progress, or reaching its climax, a famous literary and theatrical quarrel, in which Ben Jonson was one of the principal actors. Mr. Fleay observes—though I know not on what grounds—that "the quarrel was known as the 'War of the theatres.'"[1] In relation to this quarrel two dramatic works stand out with especial prominence, one of these being Ben Jonson's *The Poetaster; or his Arraignment*, and the other Dekker's *Satiromastix, or the Untrussing of the Humorous Poet*, which was designed as a counterblast to the *Poetaster*. In the passage of the *Return from Parnassus* just quoted, there is clearly an allusion to the *Poetaster* in what is said of Ben Jonson's "bringing up Horace giving the poets a pill." In the *Poetaster* (Act v. sc. 1) Horace (that is, Jonson) says,—

> "I have pills about me,
> Mixt with the whitest kind of hellebore,
> Would give him a light vomit, that should purge
> His brain and stomach of those tumorous heats."

The pills are taken, and speedily produce their due effect. The allusion to this in the *Return from Parnassus* is clear enough; but what is referred to when it is said that "Shakespeare hath given him (*i.e.* Jonson) a purge that made him beray his credit?" The suggestion easily presents itself that the reference is to the *Satiromastix*. What is said of Jonson's "credit" having been tarnished is not difficult to explain in view of the unsparing severity with which, in the *Satiromastix*, personal and other characteristics of Jonson's are satirised. And that there is in the *Return from Parnassus* an allusion to the *Satiromastix*, with its "untrussing of the humorous poet," is rendered very probable indeed by what Kemp says a little further on in the same scene:—"You are at Cambridge still with [size

[1] *Chronicle History of the Life and Work of Shakespeare*, p. 36. Dekker, however, in his *Rauens Almanack*, speaks of "another ciuill warre," which "will fal between players." But this is in 1609.

que] and be lusty humorous poets, you must vntrusse, I [made] this my last circuit, purposely because I would be judge of your actions."[1] Here, too, we have the idea of "arraignment" as in both the *Poetaster* and the *Satiromastix*. But how could the *Satiromastix* be ascribed to Shakespeare, so that it could be said that it was he who "gave the purge"? Did Dekker write it at Shakespeare's instigation? If not, on what other ground could the attack on Jonson be ascribed to Shakespeare? The action of the *Satiromastix* takes place under the sway of King William Rufus; and it was the opinion of the late Mr. Richard Simpson that this monarch was intended to represent Shakespeare,[2] who thus "presides over the untrussing of the humorous poet," being "brought in," Mr. Simpson observes, "as William Rufus directing the punishment of Jonson, but giving no brilliant example of chastity in his own person." Mr. Simpson places in close relation to this the story already alluded to about Shakespeare and Burbage, William the Conqueror and Richard the Third. And certainly the way in which William Rufus carries off Walter Terrill's bride is in no small degree analogous to what is said of Shakespeare in the William the Conqueror story. The suggestion may be made that there is a designed allusion to this story in the *Satiromastix*. If the story was widely circulated—and it must be remembered also how close in point of time is Manningham's notice—the spectators of the play would have little difficulty in recognising Shakespeare, notwithstanding the slight change of William the Conqueror into William Rufus. For this change, indeed, Shakespeare's light hair and probably ruddy complexion would easily account.[3]

[1] I still quote from Mr. Macray's edition.

[2] *North British Review*, July 1870, art. "Ben Jonson's Quarrel with Shakspeare," p. 416.

[3] Wivell (*Shakspeare Portraits*, 1827, pp. 128, 129, 131) says of the Stratford bust, that it was "originally coloured to resemble life, con-

If Shakespeare was thus intended by the character of King William Rufus, it is not easy to suppose that the *Satiromastix* was put on the stage at his instigation or with his concurrence, notwithstanding that it was acted by his own company. Mr. Fleay appears to be of opinion that this would not have occurred if Shakespeare had been in London at the time (*Chronicle History*, p. 43). And Mr. Simpson thought that Shakespeare was much vexed at the attack on himself in the *Satiromastix;* and, moreover, that "he seems to refer to and protest against the general ill-fame under which he laboured at this time in his 121st Sonnet—'"Tis better to be vile than vile esteemed,'" &c.[1]

For our present purpose, however, it is, in accordance with what has been already said, not necessary to affirm that the story about William the Conqueror is true, nor need we assert that Shakespeare was satirised in Dekker's play. It is sufficient, with reference to the 121st Sonnet and other allusions previously quoted, that we have evidence that in or about 1601 there was in circulation scandal affecting Shakespeare's moral character and connected with the theatre, and also that there was at the same time a

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formably to the taste of the times in which the monument was erected, the eyes being of a light hazel, and the hair and beard auburn."

"In the year 1748 this monument was carefully restored, and the original colours of the bust, &c., as much as possible preserved (by Mr. John Hall, a limner of Stratford)." Subsequently (1793) it was "painted white at the request of Mr. Malone," p. 133.

Mr. Friswell (*Life Portraits of Shakspeare*, 1864, p. 7) says:—"The bust has now been restored to its last coat of colour by Mr. Collins of New Bond Street, who prepared for it a bath of some detergent, which entirely took off Malone's whitewash," &c. We may take it, then, that the bust represents approximately Shakespeare's complexion, colour of hair, &c.

The following quotation from Manningham's Diary may also be given with respect to contemporary use of the word "Rufus:"—"I askt Mr. Leydall whether he argued a case according to his opinion. He said, noe! but he sett a good colour upon it. I told him he might well doe soe, for he neuer wants a good colour; he is Rufus."

[1] *North British Review*, loc. cit. p. 411.

theatrical quarrel in which Shakespeare was supposed to have taken part. It is not at all difficult to understand how, from such elements, scandal and slander may have grown and become intensified to any possible degree or extent. Moreover, the scandal was probably concerned also with other matters which are now unknown. But, whatever may have been the cause or causes of the scandal, there is ground for believing that it had a deep and powerful influence on Shakespeare's mind, and, in consequence, on those great dramas which were produced during several years onward from 1601.[1]

[1] What is said in the Folio *Hamlet* (Act ii. sc. 2, lines 372–376) of the "throwing about of brains" and the "poet and the player going to cuffs in the question" may very well pertain to the quarrel as existing in 1601. But, as this is absent from the Quartos of 1603 and 1604, an objection might easily be made to the citation of the passage as authoritative.

CHAPTER XIV.

INDICATIONS OF GLOOM IN THE SONNETS AND SOME OTHER OF SHAKESPEARE'S WORKS.

THERE is a remarkable passage in Hallam's *Literature of Europe* (Part III., chap. vi. § 42), from which a quotation must here be made:—"There seems to have been a period in Shakespeare's life when his heart was ill at ease, and ill content with the world or his own conscience; the memory of hours misspent, the pang of affection misplaced or unrequited, the experience of man's worser nature, which intercourse with unworthy associates, by choice or circumstance peculiarly teaches;—these, as they sank down into the depths of his great mind, seem not only to have inspired into it the conception of Lear and Timon, but that of one primary character, the censurer of mankind. This type is first seen in the philosophic melancholy of Jaques, gazing with an undiminished serenity, and with a gaiety of fancy, though not of manners, on the follies of the world. It assumes a graver cast in the exiled Duke of the same play, and next one rather more severe in the Duke of Measure for Measure. In all these, however, it is merely contemplative philosophy. In Hamlet this is mingled with the impulses of a perturbed heart under the pressure of extraordinary circumstances; it shines no longer, as in the former characters, with a steady light, but plays in fitful coruscations under feigned gaiety and extravagance. In Lear it is the sudden flash of inspiration across the incongruous imagery of madness; in Timon it is obscured by the exaggerations of misanthropy. These plays all belong to

nearly the same period: As You Like It being usually referred to 1600, Hamlet, in its altered form, to about 1602, Timon to the same year, Measure for Measure to 1603, and Lear to 1604."

In this passage no mention is made of some plays of Shakespeare which must be referred to the period in question; and objection may be made to Hallam's statements with regard to certain details. Nevertheless the passage just quoted is a remarkable one; and it is to be observed that in arriving at the conclusion expressed Hallam does not seem to have taken any account of the Sonnets. It will be seen, however, that Hallam's conclusions derived from the Plays are in singular agreement with those which we have attained concerning the Sonnets.[1] The period of Shakespeare's life, when his heart was ill at ease, Hallam places about the year 1600. According to the chronological indications already reviewed it was a little before this time that Shakespeare's mistress proved unfaithful to him, deserting him for his young friend; that his feelings were wounded through the favour supposed to be shown by his friend to George Chapman, and that through these or other causes there occurred a breach of the intimacy lasting for some time, probably about eighteen months (1599–1601). During this interval there was, as shown in the last chapter, scandal afloat concerning the poet's character, but, notwithstanding this, and the "wretched errors" which he confesses that he had committed (119), it would appear nevertheless from 100 that he had been busy with literary work. Obviously, however, the complimentary language of this Sonnet

[1] In treating of the Sonnets, however, in Part III. chap. v., Hallam adds in a note:—"Pembroke succeeded to his father in 1601. I incline to think that the Sonnets were written about that time, some probably earlier, some later. That they were the same as Meres, in 1598, has mentioned . . . I do not believe, both on account of the date, and from the peculiarly personal allusions they contain."

is not to be taken as a serious estimate by Shakespeare of the value of his work :—

> "Where art thou, Muse, that thou forget'st so long
> To speak of that which gives thee all thy might?
> Spend'st thou thy fury on some worthless song,
> Darkening thy power to lend base subjects light?
> Return, forgetful Muse, and straight redeem
> In gentle numbers time so idly spent;
> Sing to the ear that doth thy lays esteem,
> And gives thy pen both skill and argument."

On which of his works was Shakespeare then engaged? In 1600 there were placed on the Stationers' Register the titles of the three plays *Henry V.*, *Much Ado about Nothing*, and *As You Like It*. This, however, does not enable us to determine as precisely as is desirable for our present purpose the date of composition. And a remark somewhat similar may be made with regard to the time when *Twelfth Night* was written, though this may very possibly be of the date 1599 or 1600.[1] From the allusion in the Chorus before Act v. it may be inferred that *Henry V.* was written in 1599, when Essex was absent in Ireland. *Much Ado about Nothing* and *As You Like It* were probably both written in or about the year 1599. The former play, notwithstanding the lively encounters of Benedick and Beatrice, conveys, in relation to the plot against Hero and its consequences, an impression of sadness—an impression which, it has been observed, "would have been too tragical had not Shakespeare carefully softened it, in order to prepare for a fortunate catastrophe" (Schlegel). In *As You Like It* we have, according to Hallam, the first example of the "censurer of mankind." It might almost be said that we have a double presentation of the pessimistic philosopher in Jaques and his comic counterpart, Touchstone. The one seems to play

[1] The entry in Manningham's Diary of February 2, 1601[–2] may fix the time when he first saw the play, but it cannot fix certainly the date of its composition, or even its first presentation on the stage.

into the other's hands. This comes out most clearly, perhaps, with regard to the speech of Touchstone, as reported in Act ii. sc. 7, lines 26–28 :—

> "And so, from hour to hour, we ripe and ripe,
> And then, from hour to hour, we rot and rot;
> And thereby hangs a tale."

This "tale," the sorry account of man's life-history, is probably to be understood as given by Jaques in the well-known passage towards the conclusion of the same scene, "All the world's a stage," and giving the "strange eventful history" which ends—

> "In second childishness and mere oblivion,
> Sans teeth, sans eyes, sans taste, sans everything."

In *Twelfth Night* the most noteworthy thing, with reference to our present purpose,[1] is the clown's song at the end, a song which Charles Knight declared to be, in his judgment, "the most philosophical clown's song upon record." But if the song is a philosophical song, the philosophy has a strong tinge of pessimism. The course of things in the world ever goes on in the same way :—"A great while ago the world began." Men are prone to evil, and for evil-doers and all, the world is at best a rough and harsh world, "for the rain it raineth every day." But whatever element of melancholy or pessimism there may be in the three comedies just mentioned, they are separated by a wide gulf from those so-called "bitter comedies," *Troilus and Cressida* and *Measure for Measure*.[2] A similar remark might be made with regard to *Julius Cæsar* and the tragedy

[1] Dr. Furnivall has remarked, with regard to *Twelfth Night*, in his Introduction to the *Leopold Shakspere* :—"It is to the Sonnets that we turn for a parallel to Viola's pleading with Olivia to marry the Duke, and not to forbear to leave a copy of her beauty to the world, and to the Sonnets to his mistress for Shakspere's love of music" (p. lix.).

[2] *The Merry Wives of Windsor* was first printed (imperfectly) in 1602; but the play was probably written before *Henry V.*

which probably stands next to it in order of time, *Hamlet*. *Julius Cæsar* is the first of Shakespeare's series of greater tragedies. An allusion in Weever's *Mirror of Martyrs* (1601) pretty certainly fixes the date of production to about 1600. The play is very symmetrical; and though Fate is everywhere dominant, steadily working on to the tragical consummation, the play cannot be called pessimistic. For the vast difference which appears when we turn to *Hamlet* a reason may be assigned if at this point we place (and, as we have seen, the chronological indications are entirely in accordance with our so placing it) that scandal concerning his character which pressed on Shakespeare so heavily (*supra*, p. 115), making him feel as if his forehead had been branded, and causing him to speak as though cut off from the world, with his ears deaf alike to flattery and censure (112). To the hostility to mankind thus displayed may be ascribed (as being at least one cause) the deep pessimism of *Hamlet*. Mankind are exhibited in this play as though perhaps attractive without, like "the most beautified Ophelia," yet incurably diseased, and rotten to the core. It is this view of mankind generally, and certainly not any special depravity on the part of Ophelia, which accounts for Hamlet's mysterious treatment of her while she was sewing in her chamber, when, after that intent look at her with his hand over his brow, drawing back "to the length of all his arm,"—

> "He rais'd a sigh so piteous and profound,
> That it did seem to shatter all his bulk,
> And end his being" (Act ii. sc. 1, lines 94–96).

And in the next scene, somewhat less obscurely, after speaking of an honest man as excessively rare, only one such in two or ten thousand, Hamlet describes the race as carrion putrefying in the sun. Elsewhere, too, in the play, there are various things quite in harmony with what is here said.[1]

[1] See the present writer's *Philosophy of "Hamlet."*

The poem consisting of Sonnets 100 to 126, which speaks of the scandal from which the poet was suffering, we have placed in the spring or early summer of 1601. Probably at this very time Shakespeare was at work at *Hamlet*, for on July 26, 1602, there was entered on the Stationers' Register for James Roberts, "'The Revenge of Hamlet, Prince [of] Denmarke,' as yt was latelie acted by the Lord Chamberlayne his servantes." *Measure for Measure*, which has been described by Professor Dowden as "one of the darkest and most painful of the comedies of Shakspere," gives very probable indications of having been written about the same time as *Hamlet*, though with respect to the date of *Measure for Measure* we cannot appeal to the Stationers' Register. We can do this, however, in the case of *Troilus and Cressida*. On February 7, 1602[-3]—that is, a little more than seven months after the entry of *Hamlet*—there occurs another entry, also for Roberts:—"Entred for his copie in full Court holden this day to print when he hath gotten sufficient authority for yt, The booke of 'Troilus and Cressida' as it is acted by my lord Chamberlens Men." As the expression "the Lord Chamberlain's Men" denotes Shakespeare's company, there is strong reason to believe that Shakespeare's *Troilus and Cressida*, probably in a form differing somewhat from that which has come down to us, was in process of representation in February 1603. That the play was somewhat altered and retouched previous to its being printed in 1609 is quite likely. But, even on this view of the matter, the later *Troilus and Cressida* contains evident indications of the original play, with some curious links connecting it with *Hamlet*. Two of these are especially worthy of notice. It is only when comparison is made with *Hamlet* that we can at all make out their meaning. At the commencement of the second act Thersites most mysteriously speaks of Agamemnon as being "a botchy core," and as having "boils full, all over, generally." The obscurity diminishes when we think of Hamlet treating

Ophelia as a diseased person, "going to the length of all his arm," &c. Underlying both is the idea of man's terribly repulsive moral disease. And there is the not less obscure place in Act v. sc. 8, line 1, where Hector, standing over the body of the man in splendid armour, *whom he has just killed*, addresses him, "Most putrefied core, so fair without." The difficulty is at once removed when we recollect the "most beauti*fied* Ophelia," and how Hamlet speaks of mankind as carrion putrefying in the sun (Act. ii. sc. 2, lines 181, 182). The opinion is probably correct that *Troilus and Cressida* owed its origin, wholly or in part, to Shakespeare's jealousy of Chapman, and to his fear as to the influence which the grand translation of the Iliad might exert on his valuable young friend. But though the real or supposed rivalry of Chapman may have been the primary cause for the ridicule poured so unsparingly on the Homeric heroes, far more potent, probably, was Shakespeare's disaffection towards mankind. Dowden remarks (*Shakspere Primer*, p. 129):— "All the Greek heroes who fought against Troy are pitilessly exposed to ridicule; Helen and Cressida are light, sensual, and heartless, for whose sake it seems infatuated folly to strike a blow; Troilus is an enthusiastic young fool; and even Hector, though valiant and generous, spends his life in a cause which he knows to be unprofitable, if not evil. All this is seen and said by Thersites, whose mind is made up of the scum of the foulness of human life. But can Shakspere's view of things have been the same as that of Thersites?" Perhaps not quite so, though it may be difficult to find a nearer approximation to the truth. In fact, Dowden himself subsequently admits that "a mood of contemptuous depreciation of life may have come over Shakspere, and spoilt him, at that time, for a writer of comedies." Altogether there is no other key to the riddle of *Troilus and Cressida* at all comparable to the Sonnets, with their indications of Shakespeare's rivalry with Chap-

man, of the faithlessness of the dark lady, and of Shakespeare's bitter quarrel with the world.

Hallam places *Timon of Athens* in 1602; and there is so striking a resemblance in spirit between *Timon* and *Troilus and Cressida*, that this may not unreasonably incline us to place the two plays near together in respect of date, though, on the other hand, arguments not to be too lightly set aside have been urged in favour of a later origin. For *Lear* Hallam gives the date 1604, which is perhaps a little too early. The play cannot be called other than pessimistic. But though mankind and womankind in common, from the highest to the lowest, are fiercely denounced, the general impression with respect to human nature becomes less painful, in view of the love and devotion of Kent and Cordelia. *Macbeth* seems to be placed by Hallam outside the period of gloom. But though the prevailing spirit of the play differs from that manifested in *Hamlet* and *Troilus and Cressida*, yet there is still an exceedingly sombre and pessimistic view of the world. Macbeth at the outset is a man of average goodness. Malcolm says of him:—

> "This tyrant, whose sole name blisters our tongues,
> Was once thought honest: you have loved him well."
> (Act iv. sc. 3, lines 12, 13).

But by Fate and supernatural powers he is impelled to atrocious crime, and hurried onward to destruction. We have thus a gloomy view of the world and of the possibilities latent in human nature.[1] To discuss here *Othello*, *Coriolanus*, and *Antony and Cleopatra* is scarcely necessary. But it must be added that, whatever change had passed over Shakespeare when he wrote even the *Tempest* and the *Winter's Tale*, he had certainly not come round to an opti-

[1] Shakespeare seems to have had this pessimistic view of human nature before him when he adopted and inserted the long catalogue of latent vices with which Malcolm charges himself. Comp. also with the maggot-breeding carrion of *Hamlet*, *Macbeth*, i. 2, lines 11, 12, "The multiplying villanies of nature do swarm upon him."

mistic view of the world. This is shown by the view of essential original human nature, with its vices, given in Caliban; a portraiture marvellously resembling in several respects the picture which Swift gives of the Yahoos of Honyhnhnm-land.[1]

In accepting in the main Hallam's opinion with regard to the period of gloom in Shakespeare's history—an opinion which, as to indications of time and otherwise, agrees exceedingly well with the facts of the Sonnets—we should beware of over-stating the case with respect to the commencement of this period. Traces, more or less clear, of a pessimistic view of things may be detected even in Shakespeare's earliest works. Thus, of that "first heir of his invention," *Venus and Adonis*, Dr. Furnivall says:—"Two lines there are, reflecting Shakspere's own experience of life—his own early life in London possibly—which we must not fail to note; they are echoed in Hamlet:—

> 'For misery is trodden on by many,
> And being low, never reliev'd by any'"
> (Introd. to *Leopold Shakspere*, p. xxx.).

These lines, however, are by no means the only expression of a pessimistic tendency to be found in *Venus and Adonis*. There is the discourse of Venus with regard to the preponderant evils of love, towards the close of the poem; and a few stanzas on from the lines just quoted there is the description of terrible diseases to which man is subject:—

> "As burning fevers, agues pale and faint,
> Life-poisoning pestilence and frenzies wood,
> The marrow-eating sickness, whose attaint
> Disorder breeds, by heating of the blood:
> Surfeits, imposthumes, grief, and damn'd despair,
> Swear Nature's death, for framing thee so fair" (ll. 739–744).

Much might be similarly adduced from *Lucrece*. But to give only two stanzas:—

[1] This subject was discussed by me before the New Shakspere Society. See *Proceedings* of that Society for 1887.

"Why should the worm intrude the maiden bud?
Or hateful cuckoo hatch in sparrows' nests?
Or toads infect fair founts with venom mud?
Or tyrant folly lurk in gentle breasts?
Or kings be breakers of their own behests?
But no perfection is so absolute,
That some impurity doth not pollute" (ll. 848–854).

"The patient dies while the physician sleeps;
The orphan pines while the oppressor feeds;
Justice is feasting while the widow weeps;
Advice is sporting while infection breeds:
Thou grant'st no time for charitable deeds:
Wrath, envy, treason, rape, and murder's rages,
The heinous hours wait on them as their pages" (ll. 904–910).

This last stanza, incriminating "Opportunity," adumbrates the pessimism of Sonnet 66. Here, too, as in some other parts of the poem, we seem to have almost a prophecy of the denunciations in *Lear*.

Of Shakespeare's early comedy, *Love's Labour's Lost*, Dowden remarks (*Shakspere Primer*, p. 64), that, "with its apparent lightness, there is a serious spirit underlying the play." The sportive Berowne is dismissed to "jest a twelvemonth in an hospital,"—

"Visit the speechless sick, and still converse
With groaning wretches;"

"To move wild laughter in the throat of death."

This passage, and that previously quoted from the *Venus and Adonis*, may suggest the possibility that in early life, under circumstances now unknown, Shakespeare witnessed examples of the effects of disease so terrible as to produce a deep and enduring effect on his mind.

The fact, at any rate, is apparent that, whether from the melancholy associated with genius, or from whatever other cause, though the gloom of the Sonnets was deepened by special influences, the same tendency of mind is discernible throughout Shakespeare's literary career, as also it is imprinted on the most strongly certified of all the alleged

portraits of Shakespeare, the Droeshout engraving in the First Folio. Of the Shakespeare of this engraving, as compared with the Shakespeare of the Sonnets, Dr. Furnivall remarks:—"In the Sonnets we have the gentle Will, the melancholy mild-eyed man of the Droeshout portrait. Shakespeare's tender, sensitive, refined nature is seen clearly here (*i.e.*, in the Sonnets), but through a glass darkly in the plays" (Introd. to *Leopold Shakspere*, p. lxiv.).[1]

[1] Mr. G. Bernard Shaw, in a paper on *Troilus and Cressida*, read some time ago before the New Shakspere Society, adduced several instances of Shakespeare's displaying a pessimistic tendency or portraying pessimism in certain of his earlier plays. Some of these may be here noted.

In the *Two Gentlemen of Verona* (Act v. sc. 4) "an ordinary friend is described as one 'that's without faith or love.'"

"In the *Comedy of Errors* Antipholus speaks of his

> 'earthly gross conceit
> Smothered in errors, feeble, shallow, weak'" (Act iii. sc. 2).

Romeo anticipates the fatalism of "'Tis paltry to be Cæsar; not being Fortune, he's but Fortune's knave" (*Antony and Cleopatra*, Act v. sc. 2), by exclaiming, "I am Fortune's fool" (*Romeo and Juliet*, Act iii. sc. 1).

"Richard II. gives a strong indication of the direction in which Shakespeare's mind was travelling. He says,—

> 'Whatever I be,
> Nor I, nor any man, that but man is
> With nothing shall be pleased, till he be eased
> By being nothing'" (Act v. sc. 5).

"King Henry IV., speaking of the future, exclaims,—

> 'Oh, if this were seen,
> The happiest youth, seeing his progress through,
> What perils past, what crosses to ensue,
> Would shut the book, and sit him down and die'
> (Part 2, Act. iii. sc. 1).

When it came to this, *Troilus and Cressida* was evidently not far off."

CHAPTER XV.

SHAKESPEARE'S SCHOLARSHIP.

In relation to the Sonnets, Shakespeare's scholarship scarcely requires more than slight treatment. Of course, in Sonnet 78, where Shakespeare speaks of himself as dumb, and contrasts his rude and heavy ignorance with the grace and majesty of the learned Chapman, the expressions so employed need not be taken quite literally, though still there can be no doubt that Shakespeare's scholarship would not have borne comparison with that of the translator of Homer. Probably in the Stratford grammar school he had been pretty well drilled in Lily's Latin Grammar, and very likely he had read some portions of Ovid in the original, notwithstanding the use he afterwards made of Golding's translation. Perhaps he had little or no general acquaintance with Horace. The quotation or allusion in Sonnet 55 can be satisfactorily accounted for, as we have seen (*supra*, p. 19), without such acquaintance. The relation between the *Comedy of Errors* and the *Menæchmi* of Plautus it is not necessary here to discuss at length. It appears improbable that Shakespeare should have read in the original so difficult an author as Plautus; but, in view of known facts, the problem need not be very perplexing.[1] And, though Shakespeare may not have been entirely ignorant of Greek, it seems in no way likely that Sonnets 153 and 154 are versions made by him from the original as given in the

[1] Warner's translation was published in 1595, and the suggestion which has been made that Shakespeare had seen this in MS. is possible, or he may have received assistance privately from some unknown scholar.

Anthology. From there being two versions of the fable, it would seem to have greatly interested Shakespeare, but what translation he employed has not been ascertained.[1]

In Sonnets 46, 87, 134, and elsewhere, there is a use of legal phraseology which it is perhaps best to ascribe to close observation of what was going on around rather than to Shakespeare's having obtained temporary employment in a lawyer's office.

[1] Latin translations had appeared on the Continent, though not, so far as is known, in England. Cf. Hertzberg, *Shakespeare Jahrbuch*, 1878, pp. 161, 162.

CHAPTER XVI.

EDITIONS OF THE SONNETS IN THE SEVENTEENTH CENTURY.

In 1599, as stated above, appeared *The Passionate Pilgrim* with the following title :—

"THE PASSIONATE PILGRIME. *By W. Shakespeare.* At London printed for W. Iaggard, and are to be sold by W. Leake, at the Grey-hound in Paules Churchyard. 1599."

The volume derives, perhaps, its chief importance from its containing two of Shakespeare's Sonnets, 138 and 144. When these Sonnets, as they appeared in 1599, are compared with the text published ten years later, differences of reading become manifest, such as could certainly not have arisen from faults in transcription or from errors of the press. To give an example. In the *Passionate Pilgrim* the seventh and eighth lines of Sonnet 138 stand thus :—

> "I smiling, credite her false speaking toung,
> Outfacing faults in Loue with loues ill rest."

In the Sonnets of 1609 these two lines have become—

> "Simply I credit her false-speaking tongue,
> On both sides thus is simple truth suppresst."

A comparison of the lines thus given can scarcely leave a doubt of intentional alteration. "Outfacing faults with love's ill rest" agrees with the forced smile of the previous line :—"I smiling credit her falsehood." In the second version, one might think "smiling" would have been better than "simply;" but "simply" and "simple" have

come in together. "Vnskilfull in the world's false forgeries" (*P. P.*, line 4) becomes "Vnlearned in the world's false subtilties" in 1609; a tolerably manifest improvement. As to the way in which Jaggard got hold of the two Sonnets, nothing can here be added to what was said above.

On January 3, 1599 [1600], an entry was made in the Stationers' Register relating to a book which, it is quite likely, was published, but, if so, no copy is known to exist. The entry is to Eleazar Edgar:—

"Entred for his copye under the handes of the Wardens. A booke called Amours by J. D. with *certen oy*r [other] *sonnetes* by W. S. . . . vj^{d}." [1]

The author denoted by W. S. may possibly have been Shakespeare; but under the circumstances of course no decided opinion can be expressed.

The first edition of the collected Sonnets bears the title—

"SHAKE-SPEARES SONNETS. Neuer before Imprinted. At London. By G. Eld for T. T. and are to be solde by William Aspley. 1609."

Or, instead of "William Aspley," is found "Iohn Wright, dwelling at Christ Church gate."

The book is not printed quite so accurately as was possible at the time, but still it is printed fairly well. It is pretty evident that Shakespeare did not correct successive proofs; but there is no probability that this supervision on the part of the author, if it existed at all, was nearly so common and indispensable as it is now.[2] In the present

[1] Arber's *Transcript*, vol. iii.

[2] But it would seem certainly to be a mistake to say that the correction of the press by the author was unknown in Elizabethan times. At the end of Breton's *Will of Wit* (1599) there is a note—"What faults are escaped in the printing, finde by discretion, and excuse the author, by other worke that let him from attendance to the presse" (Halliwell's Reprint, 1860).

According to Mr. Halliwell Phillips, in May 1609 Shakespeare's company

case the frequent misprint of "their" for "thy" (46 *al.*) furnishes tolerably conclusive evidence. The question, however, remains undecided whether the printer, or "the well-wishing adventurer in setting forth," T. T. (Thomas Thorpe), received from Shakespeare the MS. of the Sonnets. No sure inference can be drawn from the use of the expression "well-wishing." Thorpe may have wished well to Shakespeare and Mr. W. H., even if he printed the Sonnets without direct sanction. But there is another indication of greater importance. That Shakespeare intended the publication of the first series of Sonnets may, as already mentioned (p. 14), be inferred from the concluding couplet of 38:—

> "If my slight Muse do please these curious days,
> The pain be mine, but thine shall be the praise;"

and the indication thus given should be taken together with Shakespeare's frequent predictions of the immortality of his verses. It is possible that Shakespeare handed the MS. to Thorpe, and then, through absence from London or other cause, may have had nothing further to do with the publication of the book. That Herbert took a good deal of trouble in preserving and collecting the Sonnets, and that, having so done, he handed them over to Thorpe for publication, seems to me not quite likely. The conjecture is not, perhaps, altogether improbable that whatever of due order and arrangement the Sonnets as published possess was given to them by Shakespeare himself; that copies were made in MS. for distribution among the poet's "private friends;" that one of these copies fell into the hands of Thorpe, who also received information as to the patron and friend of the "ever-living poet," though, in accordance with not uncommon usage, he thought it expedient to give only initials.

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were engaged in provincial performances (*Outlines of the Life of Shakespeare*, 7th ed., vol. i. p. 227). But no inference can be drawn from this as to Shakespeare's being in or out of London when the book was printed.

To the Sonnets was appended "A Louers complaint. By William Shake-speare." But with this appendix we are not now concerned. Altogether, including Title and Dedication, there were but forty leaves.

In 1640 was issued a volume which, if called a second edition of the Sonnets, can be so called only when the word "edition" is used with considerable freedom. Sonnets 18, 19, 43, 56, 75, 76, 96, and 126 are omitted, and with respect to the rest the order of the edition of 1609 is little regarded. The volume contains, besides Shakespeare's work, quasi-Shakespearian poems from the *Passionate Pilgrim* and other sources, as well as a number of translated pieces, and three elegies on Shakespeare. We should have, apparently, to regard all these as ascribed to Shakespeare, if we were to take literally the heading of the appendix to the book:—"An Addition of some excellent Poems, to those precedent, of Renowned *Shakespeare*, By other Gentlemen." The volume is much thicker than that of 1609, is printed on a much smaller page, and bears the title,—"POEMS: WRITTEN BY WIL. SHAKESPEARE, Gent. Printed at *London* by *Tho. Cotes*, and are to be sold by *Iohn Benson*, dwelling in St. *Dunstans* Church-yard. 1640."[1]

The publisher, Benson, prefixed to the volume an Address to the Reader which, though not at all remarkable for critical discernment, is nevertheless important as bearing testimony to the Sonnets being, on their first publication, less popular than the Plays:—

TO THE READER.

I Here presume (under favour) to present to your view some excellent and sweetely composed Poems, of Master William Shakespeare, *Which in themselves appeare of the same purity, the Authour himselfe then living avouched; they*

[1] There is also on the title a floral device with the motto, "HEB. DDIM. HEB. DDIEV."

had not the fortune by reason of their Infancie in his death to have the due accomodatiō of proportionable glory with the rest of his ever-living Workes, yet the lines of themselves will afford you a more authentick approbation than my assurance any way can, to invite your allowance, in your perusall you shall find them Seren, *cleere and eligantly plaine, such gentle straines as shall recreate and not perplexe your braine, no intricate or cloudy stuffe to puzzell intellect, but perfect eloquence; such as will raise your admiration to his praise: this assurance I know will not differ from your acknowledgment. And certaine I am, my opinion will be seconded by the sufficiency of these ensuing lines; I have beene somewhat solicitus to bring this forth to the perfect view of all men; and in so doing glad to be serviceable for the continuance of glory to the deserved Author in these his Poems.*

I. B.

How Benson could write of the "elegant plainness" of the Sonnets, and of there being nothing intricate in them "to puzzle intellect," it may not be quite easy to understand.[1] No doubt, however, he would have been glad to get as many customers for the book as possible. Perhaps he had heard it objected that the Sonnets are obscure; and he may have wished to meet the objection. How very far he was from understanding the Sonnets is shown by the arrangement he adopted, and by the titles or mottoes which he prefixed. If these mottoes are not of much value with respect to the meaning of the Sonnets, they may, nevertheless, be given here as possessing some historical importance:—

The glory of beautie . 67, 68, 69	*The force of love* 57, 58
Injurious Time 60, 63, 64, 65, 66	*The beautie of Nature* . . . 59
True Admiration . . . 53, 54	*Loves crueltie* 1, 2, 3

[1] Dowden considers, however, that perhaps Benson refers "to the obscurity of the reigning 'metaphysical school of poetry.'"

Youthfull glory . . . 13, 14, 15
Good admonition . . . 16, 17
Quicke prevention 7
Magazine of beautie . . . 4, 5, 6
An invitation to Marriage 8, 9, 10, 11, 12
False beleefe 138
A Temptation 144
True content 21
A bashfull Lover 23
Strong conceite 22
The Exchange 20
A disconsolation . . 27, 28, 29
The benefit of Friendship 30, 31, 32
A congratulation . . 38, 39, 40
Losse and gaine 41, 42
Melancholy thoughts . . . 44, 45
Loves Releefe . . . 33, 34, 35
Vnanimitie 36, 37
A Master-peece 24
Happinesse in content . . . 25
A dutifull Message 26
Goe and come quickly . . 50, 51
Two faithfull friends . . 46, 47
Carelesse neglect 48
Stoute resolution 49
Sat fuisse 62
A living monument 55
Familiaritie breeds contempt . 52
Patiens Armatus 61
A Valediction . . . 71, 72, 74
Nil magnis Invidia 70
Love-sicke 80, 81
The Picture of true Love . . 116
In prayse of his love 82, 83, 84, 85
A Resignation 86, 87
A Request to his scornfull Love 88, 89, 90, 91
A Lovers affection though his Love prove unconstant 92, 93, 94, 95
Complaint for his Loves absence 97, 98, 99
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Selfe flattery of her beautie . 113, 114, 115
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A good construction of his Loves unkindnesse 120
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Vpon the receit of a Table Booke from his Mistris . . . 122
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Life and death 145
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Love's powerful subtilty 148, 149, 150
Retaliation 78, 79
Sunne set 73, 77
A monument to Fame . 107, 108
Perjurie 151, 152
Cupids Treacherie . . 153, 154

The foregoing list is restricted to the Sonnets included

by Benson, omitting extraneous poems. Why 18, 19, 43, 56, 75, 76, 96, 126 should have been excluded it is not altogether easy to see. If it be said that Benson intended to convey the impression that the Sonnets of the first series were addressed to a woman, and that some of those just mentioned would not agree with this view, still it must be remembered that others equally unsuitable to the theory in question were admitted; as 3, 16, 26.

Notwithstanding what Benson says of his publication being "serviceable for the continuance of glory to the Author," it is perhaps best regarded as a bookseller's venture, influenced mainly by commercial considerations. Whether in this respect the book was successful we have apparently no means of ascertaining.[1]

[1] It is remarkable, however, that seventy years later, in 1710, the edition of 1609 was reprinted, and issued by Lintott, while, simultaneously or nearly so, another edition, which has been ascribed to Gildon as editor, gave substantially the edition of 1640. The first of these editions professes to give "all the Miscellanies of Mr. *William Shakespeare*, which were Publish'd by himself in the year 1609, and now correctly Printed from those Editions." Among those "Miscellanies" are included the "One Hundred and Fifty Four Sonnets, all of them in Praise of his Mistress." The second, professing to be the seventh volume of Shakespeare's works, and "Printed for E. Curll," &c., heads its reprint, so far as the Sonnets are concerned, as "Poems on several occasions."

CHAPTER XVII.

CRITICISM OF THE TEXT.

The criticism of the text in the Sonnets is not attended with difficulties nearly so great as those which present themselves in relation to several other of Shakespeare's works. This results from the fact that the edition of 1609 is to so very considerable an extent the sole authority. The great critical difficulty of the Sonnets is presented by the commencement of the second line in 146, where, in the edition of 1609, are found the words, "My sinfull earth," repeated from the end of the first line:—

> "Poore soule the center of my sinfull earth,
> My sinfull earth these rebbell powres that thee array,
> Why dost thou pine within and suffer dearth," &c.

The second line is obviously wrong. Of suggested emendations the Cambridge editors give, "Fool'd by those rebel," Malone; "Starv'd by the rebel," Steevens conj.; "Fool'd by these rebel," Dyce; "Thrall to these rebel," Anon. conj. Professor Dowden adds other emendations:—"Foil'd by these rebel," F. T. Palgrave; "Hemm'd with these rebel," Furnivall; "My sins these rebel," Bullock; "Slave of these rebel," Cartwright; "My sinful earth these rebel powers array," G. Massey, the word "array" being taken by Massey as implying set their battle in array against the soul. Professor Dowden himself gives "Press'd by these rebel." I regard as preferable the reading "Why feed'st these rebel," having regard to the scope and meaning of the Sonnet, and perhaps also to the vocalisation of the line.

"Feed'st" is found in the first Sonnet (line 7), and in a context where the thought is by no means altogether alien from that of 146.[1]

Before the 1609 edition was printed, it is not quite improbable that the Sonnets generally, or the major part of them, had been subjected to revision. In this process of change and revision, the termination of one line may have been altered, while that of the line corresponding with it may, through oversight, have remained unchanged. We may thus account for the terminations of 25, lines 9 and 11:—

"The painefull warrior famosed for worth,
. . . . . .
Is from the booke of honour rased quite."

Errors of the press, however, sometimes assume a strange aspect; and whatever may be the fact with regard to the example just given, there need not be much difficulty in ascribing to a mistake of the compositor the repetition of "loss" in 34, lines 10, 12:—

"Though thou repent, yet I haue still the losse,
. . . . . .
To him that bears the strong offenses losse."

The frequent substitution of "their" for "thy" in the 1609 Quarto was ascribed, and in all probability rightly ascribed by Malone, to a misunderstanding of the manuscript. Either "thy" may have been so written as to be mistaken for an abbreviation of "their," or sufficient distinction may not have been made between the abbreviated form of the one word and the other. Some of the lines, however, as printed in the Quarto with "their," make nonsense, which it may seem strange that Thorpe, or Eld

[1] With regard to the second Sonnet, Dowden has observed:—"It is curious to note that *siege* and *livery* are in close juxtaposition" (Note on 146, line 2). Shakespeare may have had the language and thought of these first Sonnets before his mind when he wrote 146.

the printer, should have overlooked. An example may be given from 46, a Sonnet in which "their" occurs wrongly four times :—

> "Mine eye and heart are at a mortall warre,
> How to deuide the conquest of thy sight,
> Mine eye, my heart their pictures sight would barre," &c.

In other cases the critic requires to keep in view both the greater laxity of Elizabethan orthography, and also the pretty evident fact that this laxity was accompanied by a pronunciation not only in important respects differing from that which now prevails, but which was, even in the mouths of educated persons, more obtuse and less precise. We may thus account for the rhyme "steeld" and "held" in 24, lines 1, 3, and "sheeds" and "deeds" in 34, lines 13, 14,—

> "Ah but those teares are pearle which thy loue sheeds,
> And they are ritch, and ransome all ill deeds."

And, of course, in relation to the Sonnets, as elsewhere, the critic should so far observe the general rule that the more difficult reading is to be preferred as to be on his guard against accepting too readily emendations of tempting facility. Thus, in 23, line 9,—

> "O let my books be then the eloquence," &c.,

though on a superficial view the suggested emendation "looks" may seem admissible, a more thorough consideration of the context will probably suffice to show that "books" is certainly to be retained.

CHAPTER XVIII.

SKETCH OF THE HISTORY OF INTERPRETATION.

It has been considered that in Jonson's *Bartholomew Fair* (1614), Act v. sc. 3, there is an allusion to Shakespeare's Sonnets, or the circumstances connected with them, in what is said of Damon and Pythias, "two faithful friends o' the Bankside," who "have but one drab." Considering the mention of Burbage and the Bankside, together with other allusions, the supposed reference may be regarded as *possible*, though I should not like to say more. We may suppose, however, that to Jonson probably the main facts concerning Shakespeare, his friend, and the dark lady would be known, even if such knowledge was not very widely diffused among the general public.[1] It seems, indeed, not quite easy to understand how—if the facts connected with the Sonnets had become extensively known—in a time so short as twenty-four years from the death of Shakespeare, and ten from that of Herbert, so great a departure from the truth as that manifested by the edition of 1640 could possibly have

[1] Dowden mentions this supposed allusion, citing, with reference to it, Elze's *William Shakespeare*, p. 499. Dowden remarks, also, in the same place (larger ed. of Sonnets, p. 45), that some critics have supposed an allusion to Thorpe's dedication (to Mr. W. H.) in Jonson's dedication of his *Epigrams* to "William Earl of Pembroke, Lord Chamberlain, &c." In the dedication Jonson says that he dare not change Pembroke's title, and that there was nothing in his *Epigrams* in expressing which he needed to employ a cipher. But there may possibly be an allusion to playing on the "Will" in Pembroke's name. Cf. Sonnets 135, 136, and also John Davies of Hereford's dedication of his "Select Second Husband" to Pembroke contains the verse, "For *Will* (good-*Will*) desired it might be YOU" (Grosart's Reprint in *Chertsey Worthies' Library*, vol. ii.).

occurred. Even upon the supposition that the publisher Benson thought that poems in which affection was so warmly expressed would suit the public taste better when treated as addressed to a woman, he could scarcely have made so great changes in their order, and have given some of them the titles prefixed in his edition, if the truth with regard to the Sonnets had been very widely known. Whatever the cause—whether that the Sonnets did "puzzle intellect," and were not quite so "elegantly plain" and free from difficulty as Benson wished to make out—it seems pretty clear that he was right in saying that they had not obtained their "due accomodation of proportionable glory."

The opinion that the Sonnets are concerned mainly with female fascinations—whether previously existing in the public mind or originating in Benson's publication—would seem to have prevailed, so far, indeed, as the Sonnets received any attention, for considerably more than a century. When the edition of 1609 was reprinted, *circ.* 1710, the statement appeared on the title that all the hundred and fifty-four Sonnets were in praise of the poet's mistress. Seventy years later (1780) Malone gave expression to the fact of which the evidence was unmistakable, that the first one hundred and twenty-six Sonnets were addressed to a male friend of the poet's. Here, at any rate, light was let in on the darkness. As to who was this male friend of Shakespeare no suggestion of any value appears to have been made either by Malone or his friends. Malone thought that Tyrwhitt's "conjecture will not appear improbable" that "the initials W. H. in the Dedication stand for W. Hughes," a person otherwise unknown. Drake in 1817 identified Lord Southampton with the subject of Sonnets 1 to 126.[1] As to the last twenty-eight, they had, in his opinion, no reference to any particular individual. Certainly, however, Southampton is not the

[1] *Shakespeare and his Times*, vol. ii. p. 62.

person addressed in the first series of Sonnets, and with regard to the remainder, Drake's assertion was a receding from the more just position of Malone that the last "twenty-eight are addressed to a lady."

It was not long after the date of Drake's work that Mr. B. Heywood Bright mentioned in a private communication (1819) his discovery of the similarity between the "W. H." of the Dedication of the Sonnets and the name of William Herbert, Earl of Pembroke, to whom the First Folio had been dedicated. Mr. Bright did not, however, at the time issue any publication giving the results he had attained; but thirteen years later (1832) Mr. James Boaden, working independently, published in the *Gentleman's Magazine* conclusions identical with those at which Mr. Bright had arrived. Some difficulties remained, but the identity of William Herbert with Shakespeare's friend of the Sonnets was shown to rest on grounds of much probability; and thus a very important additional step was taken towards the true understanding of the Sonnets.

This step was accepted and sanctioned by Mr. C. Armitage Brown in his work entitled *Shakespeare's Autobiographical Poems* (1838). Mr. Brown divided the Sonnets 1 to 152 into six poems, alleging that "the two Sonnets printed at the end, about Cupid and a nymph of Diana, belong to nothing but themselves." Mr. Brown's division cannot be fully accepted; it was, however, as follows:—(I.) 1 to 26. "To his friend, persuading him to marry;" (II.) 27 to 55. "To his friend—who had robbed the poet of his mistress—forgiving him;" (III.) 56 to 77. "To his friend, complaining of his coldness, and warning him of life's decay;" (IV.) 78 to 101. "To his friend, complaining that he prefers another poet's praises, and reproving him for faults that may injure his character;" (V.) 102 to 126. "To his friend, excusing himself for having been some time silent, and disclaiming the charge of inconstancy;" (VI.) 127 to 152. "To his mistress on her infidelity."

Mr. Brown's work marks a distinct advance in the manner in which it recognises the basis of fact underlying the Sonnets, and in the assignment of 153 and 154 to a distinct group.

Even in so brief a sketch as this Hallam (1840) may be mentioned on account of his firm grasp of important results previously attained, and also because of his expressing the opinion that the Sonnets were written about the year 1601, some earlier and some later.[1] In 1866 Mr. Gerald Massey published a large volume on the Sonnets (*The Secret Drama of Shakespeare's Sonnets*), which, however, unless it be in some matters of detail, can scarcely be said to have promoted the true interpretation.[2] A similar remark may be made with regard to the work of Mr. Henry Brown, published in 1870; a work in some respects meritorious, but disfigured by a conceit so absurd as that of Shakespeare having married his Muse to Herbert.[3] Professor Minto in 1874 made an important addition to what previous interpreters had effected, by his identification of the rival poet with George Chapman.[4] In 1877, as a part of the Introduction to the *Leopold Shakspere* (1877), Dr. Furnivall gave the fruits of his investigations into the connection of the Sonnets, making in this respect an important advance on the work of Mr. Armitage Brown. Hertzberg in 1878 (*Shakespeare Jahrbuch*) was able to indicate the source whence Sonnets 153 and 154 were derived. In 1881 Professor Dowden published his valuable editions, with Introduction and Notes, giving the results of his own researches and a large mass of important information. With regard to the growing consensus of opinion as to the nature of the Sonnets, Dowden observes:—"With Wordsworth, Sir Henry Taylor, and Mr. Swinburne; with François Victor Hugo; with Kreyssig

[1] *Literature of Europe*, Part III., chaps. v., vi.

[2] The same remark may be made of the new edition, 1888.

[3] *The Sonnets of Shakespeare Solved*, Lond., 1870.

[4] *Characteristics of English Poets*, 2nd edit., pp. 221 *sqq*.

Ulrici, Gervinus, and Hermann Isaac; with Boaden, Armitage Brown, and Hallam; with Furnivall, Spalding, Rossetti, and Palgrave, I believe that Shakespeare's Sonnets express his own feelings in his own person." [1]

Other contributions to the interpretation of the Sonnets are mentioned elsewhere. By the omission of various works and other productions from this brief sketch, I do not wish to be understood as expressing the opinion that these are without value. For a fuller account of the literature of the Sonnets I must refer the reader to the bibliographical notices in Professor Dowden's larger edition. It is to be hoped that at a future time he may be able to make this part of his work even yet more exhaustive, by including some publications which he mentions as having been inaccessible to him.

[1] Larger edition of *Shakspere's Sonnets*, pp. 16, 17.

CHAPTER XIX.

DIVISION AND GROUPING.

Considerations have been already adduced tending to show that the Sonnets, or at least the first series of them (1 to 126), are in the right order as they are found in the Quarto of 1609. Some additional observations on this arrangement remain, however, to be made. Professor Dowden, following Goedeke, has called attention to the employment of the pronouns "thou" and "you" in the various parts of this series. He observes:—"What I would call attention to, however, as exhibiting something like order and progress in the arrangement of 1609, is this: that in the first fifty Sonnets *you* is of extremely rare occurrence; in the second fifty *you* and *thou* alternate in little groups of Sonnets, *thou* having still a preponderance, but now only a slight preponderance; in the remaining twenty-six *you* becomes the ordinary mode of address, and *thou* the exception. In the Sonnets to a mistress, *thou* is invariably employed. A few Sonnets of the first series have 'my love,' and the third person throughout." Professor Dowden justly observes that it is difficult or impossible always to find in the sense the reason why the one or the other pronoun is employed. The choice may sometimes "be determined by considerations of euphony."[1] But, as a general rule, "thou" is the more distant, "you" the more familiar. It is in accordance with this that "thou" prevails in the more distant address of the first Sonnets, and "you," after three years' acquaintance, in 100 to 126.

Though the use of these pronouns is not sufficient by

[1] Introduction to *Sonnets*, larger ed., p. 25.

itself to mark the division and grouping, yet it should be taken into account together with other indications. Thus with 17 the exhortation to beget offspring terminates. The address, beginning in 1 with "thou," had become more familiar in the later portion of the seventeen Sonnets. But at the end of 17 we may suppose that, with the change of subject, there is a breach of continuity; and it is in accordance with this fact that "thou" is again employed. But still it would not be quite certain whether 1 to 17 and 18 to 26 were sent separately to Mr. W. H. as two poetical epistles, or whether, having regard to the matter and form of 26, we are to regard the first twenty-six Sonnets together as forming a single epistle. The question is here a difficult one, as in other places. Sonnet 26, however, obviously concludes a series, whether longer or shorter. Between 17 and 18 there is, as just stated, a discontinuity of thought; but connection of thought does not necessarily imply that the Sonnets so connected were transmitted together. From preserving a copy, or even without this, the poet's thoughts may have reverted from time to time to the subject of his last poetical epistle. 27 to 32 are all "thou" Sonnets; and 32 marks, with tolerable certainty, the conclusion of a group. Taking into account the couplet with which 38 ends, 33 to 38 are probably to be regarded as a distinct group, though just possibly 39 should be added. 40 to 42 are concerned with the same subject (the intrigue between Shakespeare's friend and his mistress), and would form a natural group. 43 to 47, speaking of Shakespeare's absence from his friend, may have formed a distinct poetical letter. 48 to 51 may be similarly grouped together. 52 begins a "you" group, extending to 55. In 56 to 58 the poet remonstrates with his friend on an apparent alienation of affection. 59 and 60 may be placed as a distinct group marked off by its philosophical character. 61 to 63 may be placed together, as also 64 to 68, the latter group characterised by deep melancholy; but in this part of the series the grouping becomes difficult. 69 and 70 easily dissociate themselves

from 71. 71 to 74 treat of the grave and the passing bell. 75 to 77 must be placed together, as 78 begins a new subject, which at most had only been just hinted at before. 78 to 87, concerned with the rival poet, form a not improbable group, ending with 87 and its "Farewell." 88 to 93, or 88 to 94, would form the next section; perhaps it is best to take the latter view. 95 and 96 contain a warning and rebuke, and are very clearly marked off from 97. The opinion has been expressed (*supra*, p. 27 *al.*) that there was a breach of the intimacy between Shakespeare and his friend, extending perhaps from the November of 1599 till about the May of 1601. Where, in relation to this period, are the three Sonnets 97, 98, 99 to be placed? Shakespeare in these Sonnets speaks of himself as having been absent from his friend during spring, summer, and autumn. These Sonnets may have been written in the autumn, possibly late in the autumn of 1600, and transmitted to Herbert without evoking a reply. His time and attention were probably too much occupied with various matters. But if such was the fact there need scarcely be any insuperable difficulty in accounting for the language of 100 and following Sonnets, so far as relates to Shakespeare's taking upon himself the blame of the silence and separation. The difference of social rank between the poet and his friend, and the complimentary nature of much in these poems, should always be kept in view. That, previous to the breach,[1] Shakespeare believed his friend was becoming estranged from him is sufficiently clear. 100 to 126 are, in accordance with what has been previously said, to be treated as a single poem giving various explanations concerning the period of separation. Of course, brief interruptions may have occurred during the composition of the poem; but this would not prevent its forming a single poetical epistle, deriving its unity from

[1] See also some remarks on the separation by Mr. T. A. Spalding, *Gentleman's Magazine*, March 1878, p. 316.

continued reference to the estrangement or separation, and various matters connected therewith. The exceptional form of Sonnet 126 is certainly in accordance with the supposition that this Sonnet was intended as a conclusion to the whole series. Causes which may have induced Shakespeare to bring to a definite conclusion the first series of Sonnets have been already adverted to (p. 66).

With regard to the second series of Sonnets, the division and grouping are of less importance. The last two Sonnets, 153, 154, as already stated, are best treated as a separate group.

The following scheme is based, to some extent, on that of Dr. Furnivall, as given in the *Leopold Shakspere*:—

Sonnets.

1 to 26. Whether these Sonnets were or were not transmitted together as a single poetical epistle is not quite certain. There is, however, an obvious division.

(*a*.) 1 to 17. Treat of the beauty of Shakespeare's friend. Being thus beautiful he ought to beget offspring. "Thou," &c., exclusively used in twelve of these Sonnets. "You," &c., in 13 and in 15 to 17.

(*b*.) 18 to 26. The friend's beauty and the strength of Shakespeare's attachment. "Thou" prevails.

27 to 32. "Thou" Sonnets. Some or all of these Sonnets are written while Shakespeare is away from his friend. 32 a probable termination.

33 to 38. The friend has stolen ("sweet thief," 35) Shakespeare's mistress, but has expressed contrition, and the ill deed is ransomed by tears. 38 marks termination of epistle possibly.

39. May stand alone, or possibly belong to preceding group.

40 to 42. The friend has Shakespeare's mistress, but Shakespeare's love for his friend prevails.

43 to 47. A distinct letter possibly sent by Shakespeare to his friend, while absent.

48 to 51. A group to a certain extent similar. Sonnets 34 to 51 all distinguished by "thou."

52 to 55. Group distinguished by "you." Shakespeare's love for his friend in absence. Immortality for the friend in Shakespeare's verse.

56 to 58. Shakespeare remonstrates with his friend on seeming estrangement.

Sonnets.

59, 60. Possess a peculiar philosophical character. 59 gives the doctrine of the cycles hypothetically. 60 pictures the lives of men as resembling the successive waves of the sea.

61 to 63. The poet sleepless through love: Shakespeare's self-love is love for his friend, his second self: Shakespeare waning. Immortality in Shakespeare's verse.

64 to 68. Sonnets pervaded by a spirit of melancholy.

69, 70. Shakespeare's friend has associated with bad company, though the censure is softened in 70.

71 to 74. Shakespeare discourses of his own death and of his deep love for his friend.

75 to 77. Shakespeare's verse may seem monotonous on account of his constancy, and his always treating of the same theme. Use to which the friend may apply mirror, dial, and book for manuscript.

78 to 87. Treat of a rival-poet. In 87 Shakespeare bids farewell to his friend. 81 seems to stand apart.

88 to 94. The friend estranged, or Shakespeare fancies that he is. The poet suggests in 94 that his friend is being corrupted by bad company.

95, 96. Shakespeare more expressly rebukes and warns his friend.

97, to 99. Sonnets probably composed by Shakespeare, to regain his friend's love, but without apparent success.

100 to 126. Best regarded as a single poem written on the poet being reconciled to his friend after a somewhat protracted separation. The poet alleges that his love for his friend is stronger than before: takes on himself the blame of interruption of intimacy: speaks of a scandal from which he was suffering: defends himself from the charge of unfaithfulness; and in 126 gives *L'Envoi*, and concludes the first series of Sonnets.

The second series is divided by Furnivall as follows:— | 127 | 128 | 129 | 130 | 131, 132 | 133 to 136 | 137 to 145 | 146 | 147, 148 | 149 to 152 | . Sonnets 129 and 146, however, are perhaps best regarded as having an independent character. The third series consists only of the final Sonnets, 153, 154.

But it is probably impossible to construct any scheme of division and grouping which shall not be in some, or perhaps many, respects doubtful.

SONNETS, WITH NOTES.

"With this key
Shakespeare unlocked his heart."
—WORDSWORTH.

I.

From fairest creatures we desire increase,
That thereby beauty's rose might never die,
But as the riper should by time decease,
His tender heir might bear his memory :
But thou, contracted to thine own bright eyes,
Feed'st thy light's flame with self-substantial fuel,
Making a famine where abundance lies,
Thyself thy foe, to thy sweet self too cruel.
Thou that art now the world's fresh ornament,
And only herald to the gaudy spring,
Within thine own bud buriest thy content,
And, tender churl, mak'st waste in niggarding.
Pity the world, or else this glutton be,
To eat the world's due, by the grave and thee.

I. Mr. W. H. is urged by the poet to beget offspring, so that his beauty may be perpetuated. Neglecting this advice, he is expending his vital powers on himself, depriving the world of its due, and giving assistance to the grave, which greedily consumes all.

5 *Contracted.*—Not having given extension to thyself in offspring. Cf. ii. 5–7, "Then being asked where all thy beauty lies, . . . To say within thine own deep sunken eyes," &c. Mr. W. H.'s[1] "bright eyes" are regarded as the central point or focus of his beauty. Cf. ix. 8, "By children's eyes" = "By children's features and appearance."

6 *Thy light's flame.*—An expression suggested probably by the "*bright* eyes" mentioned just before. *Self-substantial.*—Deriving its substance from thyself.

7 *Where abundance lies.*—That is, potentially.

9-12 *The world's fresh ornament, herald to the gaudy spring, thine own bud,* and *tender churl* are expressions suitable in the case of a youth but just eighteen.

11 *Thy content.*—What thou art with its possibilities or potentialities.

12 *Churl.*—Q. "chorle."[2] Moroseness towards mankind is supposed to be evinced by neglecting to provide offspring. *Mak'st waste,* &c.—Dost depopulate, by restraining the power of increase.

14 *The world's due* is the perpetuation of Mr. W. H.'s beauty. If he fails to leave children behind him, he will co-operate with the grave, destined thus to consume not only his body, but to cut off also all hope of posterity. But it depends on Mr. W. H. himself whether the grave shall exert its full power; and so what the grave consumes Mr. W. H. may be regarded as himself consuming, like a glutton. Cf. *Venus and Adonis,* line 171, "By law of nature thou art bound to breed."

[1] It is convenient, for the sake of brevity, to use in these notes the "Mr. W. H." of the Dedication. [2] Q. = Quarto of 1609.

II.

When forty winters shall besiege thy brow,
And dig deep trenches in thy beauty's field,
Thy youth's proud livery, so gaz'd on now,
Will be a tatter'd weed, of small worth held :
Then being ask'd where all thy beauty lies,
Where all the treasure of thy lusty days ;
To say, within thine own deep-sunken eyes,
Were an all-eating shame, and thriftless praise.
How much more praise deserv'd thy beauty's use,
If thou could'st answer : 'This fair child of mine
Shall sum my count, and make my old excuse ;'
Proving his beauty by succession thine.
This were to be new-made when thou art old,
And see thy blood warm when thou feel'st it cold.

II. The general subject is the same as that of the preceding Sonnet. Here, however, Mr. W. H. is warned of the coming decline of beauty, and of the inevitable effects of advancing age. With these in view he is advised to secure the renewal of his beauty in his offspring.

1 *Forty winters.*—Here, as elsewhere in these Sonnets, the indications of age are supposed to make their appearance somewhat early in life. In the first and second lines the "forty winters" are spoken of as conducting a siege against the body's citadel, the "brow."

4 *Tatter'd.*—The Quarto has "totter'd," an old form of "tatter'd." Cf. *Hamlet*, Act iii. sc. 2, line 11. The Folio has "teare a Passion to tatters," but the Quarto gives "totters." It would seem, however, that the two forms must have represented the same pronunciation or nearly so ; a tolerably clear proof of the great difference between Elizabethan pronunciation and that of our own day.

6 *Thy lusty days.*—That is, the days of thy prime. Cf. "lusty leaves," v. 7.

7 *Within thine own deep-sunken eyes.*—Cf. i. 5, "Contracted to thine own bright eyes."

8 *An all-eating shame.*—Shame which consumes the person guilty of so shameful conduct, with his posterity. Cf. i. 13, 14. *Thriftless praise.*—The context seems to require the sense "a reputation for thriftlessness."

11, 12 *Sum my count, and make my old excuse*, &c.—The world is supposed to bring a charge of indebtedness against Mr. W. H. on the ground of his decayed and vanished beauty. But the account will be summed up, balanced, and settled by his son, whose youthful beauty will furnish an excuse for Mr. W. H.'s oldness, or, perhaps, will furnish the old and customary excuse by proving that he has inherited the beauty of his father.

III.

Look in thy glass, and tell the face thou viewest,
Now is the time that face should form another;
Whose fresh repair if now thou not renewest,
Thou dost beguile the world, unbless some mother,
For where is she so fair, whose un-ear'd womb
Disdains the tillage of thy husbandry?
Or who is he so fond, will be the tomb
Of his self-love, to stop posterity?
Thou art thy mother's glass, and she in thee
Calls back the lovely April of her prime:
So thou through windows of thine age shalt see,
Despite of wrinkles, this thy golden time.
But if thou live remembered not to be,
Die single, and thine image dies with thee.

III. The same subject continued, though the treatment is varied. Mr. W. H. is at present depriving some woman of a mother's joy. His own mother sees in *his* present beauty the restoration of her former loveliness; and in like manner, if he marries, he may, when wrinkled with age, see again in his children the golden time of his youth.

3 *Fresh repair.*—Condition of healthful beauty.

4 *Unbless.*—Cf. v. 4, "And that unfair which fairly doth excel," where "unfair" is certainly a verb.

5 *Un-ear'd.*—Cf. Daniel, Sonn. xlii. 4, "On them ploughs have *ear'd.*" And the Dedication to *Venus and Adonis* furnishes another example:—"I shall be sorry it had so noble a godfather, and never after *ear* so barren a land, for fear it yield me still so bad a harvest." Of the metaphor here there is, of course, no necessity to speak.

8 *Self-love.*—Equivalent apparently to self-satisfaction: "Who is he so entirely contented with his own brief life as to care nothing for that continuance of it which posterity affords?"

9 *Thou art thy mother's glass.*—Cf. *Lucrece*, 1758–9:—

> "Poor broken glass, I often did behold
> In thy sweet semblance my old age new born."

10 *April.*—In accordance with other indications that Mr. W. H. was now in the spring-time of life, about seventeen or eighteen; and, as Professor Minto has well pointed out, lines 9, 10 are entirely suitable to the Countess of Pembroke.

11 *So thou through windows*, &c.—Cf. ii. 14, "And see thy blood warm when thou feel'st it cold."

13 But if your intention is, to be forgotten in time to come, &c.

IV.

Unthrifty loveliness, why dost thou spend
Upon thyself thy beauty's legacy?
Nature's bequest gives nothing, but doth lend,
And being frank, she lends to those are free.
Then, beauteous niggard, why dost thou abuse
The bounteous largess given thee to give?
Profitless usurer, why dost thou use
So great a sum of sums, yet canst not live?
For having traffick with thyself alone,
Thou of thyself thy sweet self dost deceive.
Then how, when Nature calls thee to be gone,
What acceptable audit canst thou leave?
Thy unus'd beauty must be tomb'd with thee,
Which, used, lives th' executor to be.

IV. The general subject is the same as before; but prominence is here given to the unthrift or wastefulness of neglecting to provide posterity, and imagery drawn from pecuniary or mercantile transactions prevails.

2 *Thy beauty's legacy.*—The legacy which thy beauty should bequeath.

3 *Nature's bequest.*—The word "bequest" is suggested apparently by the "legacy" of line 2. "Bequest" here seems equivalent to "trust." Cf. *King John*, Act v. sc. 7, line 104, "I do bequeath my faithful services," &c.

4 *Being frank*, &c.—Nature, being "most generous and free from all contriving," leaves the trust—which, however, is now spoken of as a loan—to the unfettered disposal of the recipient.

6 *Given* here contradicts in verbal form only "Nature's bequest *gives* nothing" of line 3. What is "given thee to give" is still only a trust.

7 *Profitless usurer.*—To beget posterity would be to put out to interest Nature's gift or trust. Using this for himself alone, Mr. W. H. is a "profitless usurer."

8 *So great a sum of sums.*—Implying apparently the possibility of a very numerous posterity. *Yet canst not live*, that is, beyond a brief period.

9 *For having traffick*, &c.—Being concerned only with thyself.

10 *Thou of thyself thy sweet self dost deceive.*—Dost defraud thyself of perpetuated existence.

12 *What acceptable audit*, &c.—How can Nature's account against thee be summed and settled? Cf. ii. 11, 12.

V.

Those Hours, that with gentle work did frame
The lovely gaze where every eye doth dwell,
Will play the tyrants to the very same,
And that unfair which fairly doth excel;
For never-resting Time leads Summer on
To hideous Winter, and confounds him there;
Sap check'd with frost, and lusty leaves quite gone,
Beauty o'ersnow'd, and bareness everywhere:
Then, were not summer's distillation left,
A liquid prisoner pent in walls of glass,
Beauty's effect with beauty were bereft,
Nor it, nor no remembrance what it was.
But flowers distill'd, though they with winter meet,
Leese but their show; their substance still lives sweet.

V. Has the same general subject as preceding Sonnets. The inexorable progress of time from the glory of life's summer to the winter of old age is treated of. But the sweet essence of the summer flowers is preserved when a beauteous posterity is begotten.

1 At first we have a plurality of "Hours," for which is substituted in line 5 the singular "Time."

2 *Gaze.*—Appearance.

3 *Will play the tyrants.*—Remorselessly disfigure and destroy.

4 *Unfair.*—Cf. iii. 4. *Fairly doth excel.*—Excels in fairness or beauty.

6 *Hideous Winter.*—An expression accordant with the melancholy and pessimistic tone so often heard in these Sonnets. *Confounds.*—Abases him, bringing down his power and glory.

7 *Lusty leaves.*—Leaves of his time of strength and pride. Cf. ii. 4.

9, 10 Cf. Sidney's *Arcadia*, quoted by Massey:—"Have you ever seen a pure rose-water kept in a crystal glass? How fine it looks! how sweet it smells while the beautiful glass imprisons it!" On the supposition that Mr. W. H. was William Herbert, it is easy to understand how, on forming the acquaintance, Shakespeare should have had his attention directed to, or his remembrance freshened of what Sir Philip Sidney, Herbert's uncle, had written.

11 *Beauty's effect.*—The "effect" here is the scent associated with the beautiful form of the rose. Of this form the distilled essence serves as a memento. *With.*—Together with. *Bereft.*—Taken away, destroyed.

14 *Leese.*—An old form equivalent to "lose."

VI.

Then let not Winter's ragged hand deface
In thee thy summer, ere thou be distill'd :
Make sweet some vial ; treasure thou some place
With beauty's treasure, ere it be self-kill'd.
That use is not forbidden usury,
Which happies those that pay the willing loan ;
That's for thyself to breed another thee,
Or ten times happier, be it ten for one ;
Ten times thyself were happier than thou art,
If ten of thine ten times refigur'd thee :
Then, what could death do if thou shouldst depart,
Leaving thee living in posterity ?
Be not self-will'd, for thou art much too fair
To be Death's conquest, and make worms thine heir.

VI. Follows in close connection with the last Sonnet. Here, however, the desirableness of a *numerous* posterity is more clearly expressed.

1 *Ragged.*—Malone remarks, "*Ragged* was often used as an opprobrious term in the time of our author." But it would be perhaps more correct to say that the word was used metaphorically and generally of what is harsh and rough. The hand of Winter may be spoken of as "ragged" or rough, on account of the effect produced by Winter, the "bareness everywhere" of v. 8.

3 *Vial,* of course, looks back to the previous Sonnet. *Treasure thou some place.*—Make some place rich.

4 *Ere it be self-kill'd,* that is, by the absence of posterity.

5 *That use is not forbidden usury.*—There appears to be in this and following lines some confusion between the creditor and debtor.

6 *Happies those that pay the willing loan.*—Comparing the ninth line, "Ten times thyself were happier than thou art," it would seem to be the children who are *happied,* that is, rendered happy ; and if so, it must be they who pay the "willing loan." But there is pretty evidently some confusion of thought. Or possibly the payment may be regarded as a joint payment, by the parent and children together. Of course, the payment is made to Nature, the bounteous donor or lender of Sonnet iv.

10 If there were an image of thy beauty presented by each of ten children.

VII.

Lo, in the orient when the gracious light
Lifts up his burning head, each under eye
Doth homage to his new-appearing sight,
Serving with looks his sacred majesty ;
And having climb'd the steep-up heavenly hill,
Resembling strong youth in his middle age,
Yet mortal looks adore his beauty still,
Attending on his golden pilgrimage ;
But when from high-most pitch, with weary car,
Like feeble age, he reeleth from the day,
The eyes, 'fore duteous, now converted are
From his low tract, and look another way :
So thou, thyself outgoing in thy noon,
Unlook'd on diest, unless thou get a son.

VII. The principal subject is the same; but old age is now represented, not by "hideous Winter," but by the declining sun, which (according to this Sonnet) is neglected, or regarded with aversion, as in its course it verges towards the horizon.

1 *The gracious light.*—The benignant, or beneficent, light.

2 *Each under eye.*—All eyes of those beneath.

5 *The steep-up heavenly hill.*—The steep ascent of the firmament, which, according to ancient ideas, was convex above and concave beneath.

10 *Like feeble age he reeleth from the day.*—"Reeleth," worn out with fatigue, as he passes from day to night. So in *Richard III.*, Act v. sc. 3, line 19, we have "the weary sun."

11 *Converted.*—Turned; that is, in this case, turned away.

12 *His low tract.*—The lower portion of his course. "Tract" must be taken as equivalent to "track."

13 *Outgoing in thy noon.*—Passing the meridian of life, and declining like the sun. To suppose that the poet alludes to death in the prime of life would be unsuitable to the context.

VIII.

Musick to hear, why hear'st thou musick sadly?
Sweets with sweets war not, joy delights in joy.
Why lov'st thou that which thou receiv'st not gladly?
Or else receiv'st with pleasure thine annoy?
If the true concord of well-tuned sounds,
By unions married, do offend thine ear,
They do but sweetly chide thee, who confounds
In singleness the parts that thou shouldst bear.
Mark how one string, sweet husband to another,
Strikes each in each by mutual ordering;
Resembling sire and child and happy mother,
Who, all in one, one pleasing note do sing:
Whose speechless song, being many, seeming one,
Sings this to thee: 'Thou single wilt prove none.'

VIII. From the harmony of domestic life resembling that of music, and the nothingness of him who remains single and alone, an argument is drawn in favour of marriage. Cf. *Daiphantus* by A. Sc. (1604):—

> "Music is only sweet
> When without discord. A consort makes a heaven.
> The ear is ravished when true voices meet.
> Odds, but in music, never makes things even,
> In voices difference breeds a pleasant ditty."

The writer of *Daiphantus* may have seen Sonn. viii. in MS., or the resemblance may be accidental. "Consort" here, it should be observed, is an old form equivalent to "concert." Among the British Museum MSS. is an example of Sonn. viii. with slight variations, probably taken from a MS. copy of the Sonnet (Add. MS. 15,226).

1 *Musick to hear.*—Whose voice in speaking is as sweet as music. *Why hear'st thou musick sadly?*—This may *possibly* mean that Mr. W. H. had no liking for music.

2–4 The qualities which Mr. W. H. possessed ought rather, in the poet's view, to have made him delight in music. And it would seem that he was accustomed to attend musical performances, though disliking them, or professing to do so. But is it not possible that the "music heard sadly" was the virginal-playing of Shakespeare's dark mistress (cxxviii.)? The sadness may thus have been caused by the impression which her fascinating endowments had already produced on Mr. W. H. This view would make lines 3 and 4 intelligible.

5, 6 *Well-tuned sounds, By unions married.*—Sounds in harmony. Harmonious sounds offend thee, because thy life of singleness is without harmony.

9–13 The life of "sire and child and happy mother" is a "speechless song," without words or sound, a musical life, resembling, however, several strings which, in their harmony, seem to give forth but one note.

14 *Thou single wilt prove none.*—Thou canst give forth no harmony, and must eventually cease altogether. But compare cxxxvi. 8,—"Among a number one is reckoned none." Cf. also Sidney's *Arcadia*, quoted by Massey,—"Then can one string make as good music as a consort?" *consort* being used formerly for *concert*. Cf. quotation from *Daiphantus* above.

IX.

Is it for fear to wet a widow's eye,
That thou consum'st thyself in single life?
Ah! if thou issueless shalt hap to die,
The world will wail thee, like a makeless wife:
The world will be thy widow, and still weep,
That thou no form of thee hast left behind,
When every private widow well may keep,
By children's eyes, her husband's shape in mind.
Look, what an unthrift in the world doth spend,
Shifts but his place, for still the world enjoys it:
But beauty's waste hath in the world an end,
And kept unus'd, the user so destroys it.
No love toward others in that bosom sits,
That on himself such murderous shame commits.

IX. Mr. W. H. should not shrink from marriage, fearing that if he marries he may possibly leave a widow to lament his decease; for if he should die without issue, the world at large will be his widow, and will sorely weep over the extinction for ever of his beauty. It behoves him to regard the interests of the world.

4 *Makeless.*—Without a "make;" that is, without a mate.

8 *By children's eyes.*—Cf. note on i. 5. This is a very good example of "eyes" being used for features and appearance in general. The "eyes" enable the widow to keep in mind her husband's *shape.*

9 *An unthrift.*—A spendthrift.

10 *His.*—Its.

11 *Beauty's waste.*—The waste of beauty has no such compensation as the waste of money; since it is brought altogether to an end.

12 And beauty, unless used in the way before indicated, is wasted and destroyed. *The user.*—He who, by keeping it unused, thus misuses it.

X.

For shame! deny that thou bear'st love to any,
Who for thyself art so unprovident.
Grant if thou wilt, thou art belov'd of many,
But that thou none lov'st, is most evident;
For thou art so possess'd with murderous hate,
That 'gainst thyself thou stick'st not to conspire,
Seeking that beauteous roof to ruinate,
Which to repair should be thy chief desire.
O change thy thought that I may change my mind!
Shall hate be fairer lodg'd than gentle love?
Be as thy presence is, gracious and kind,
Or to thyself, at least, kind-hearted prove;
Make thee another self, for love of me,
That beauty still may live in thine or thee.

X. This Sonnet enlarges on the theme introduced in the concluding lines of that preceding,—that he who does not beget offspring must be influenced by deadly hatred towards the world and towards himself. In conclusion, Mr. W. H. is urged to the same course of action as before, for love of his friend the poet.

2 *Unprovident.*—Reckless of the future for thyself as for the world.

7 *That beauteous roof.*—This, it would seem, is to be understood generally of the bodily house. *To ruinate.*—Cf. "To ruinate our lives and lands," Arber's *English Garner*, vol. vii. p. 52.

9 *That I may change my mind.*—That I may not form so unfavourable a conclusion with regard to your disposition.

13 The words "for love of me" would seem to imply that Mr. W. H. had already evinced a warm attachment for Shakespeare, even though the intimacy may have been as yet but brief.

14 *That beauty still may live in thine or thee.*—Cf. *Venus and Adonis*, lines 173, 174:—

> "And so in spite of death thou dost survive,
> In that thy likeness still is left alive."

XI.

As fast as thou shalt wane, so fast thou grow'st
In one of thine, from that which thou departest;
And that fresh blood which youngly thou bestow'st,
Thou may'st call thine, when thou from youth convertest.
Herein lives wisdom, beauty, and increase;
Without this, folly, age, and cold decay:
If all were minded so, the times should cease,
And threescore years would make the world away.
Let those whom Nature hath not made for store,
Harsh, featureless, and rude, barrenly perish:
Look whom she best endow'd, she gave the more,
Which bounteous gift thou shouldst in bounty cherish;
She carv'd thee for her seal, and meant thereby,
Thou shouldst print more, nor let that copy die.

XI. By begetting children excellences are preserved. Nature intended the beautiful to discharge the parental function.

1, 2 As fast as the father declines, so fast in his child, his second self, does he grow towards, or in, that youthful beauty which he is leaving behind—"from that which thou depart'st."

3 *Youngly.*—In all the period of youth.

4 *Convertest.*—Changest towards age.

7 *If all were minded so*, that is, to act as you are now doing.

8 *Years.*—Q. has "yeare."

9 *Not made for store*, meaning possibly, not to be stored up like seed-corn reserved for sowing. At any rate the sense will be, not made for reproduction. Cf. "As many to the vantage as would store the world they played for," in *Othello*, Act iv. sc. 3, lines 85, 86.

11 *Gave the more.*—Gave the more important or greater gift, the function of reproducing their kind. Cf. the use of "more" in xxiii. 12,—"More than that tongue that more hath more express'd;" and especially "this more," meaning "this addition," in xl. 4.

14 *Copy* may be taken as pretty nearly equivalent to "design," *scil.* of Nature.

XII.

When I do count the clock that tells the time,
And see the brave day sunk in hideous night;
When I behold the violet past prime,
And sable curls all silver'd o'er with white;
When lofty trees I see barren of leaves,
Which erst from heat did canopy the herd,
And summer's green all girded up in sheaves,
Borne on the bier with white and bristly beard;
Then of thy beauty do I question make,
That thou among the wastes of Time must go,
Since sweets and beauties do themselves forsake,
And die as fast as they see others grow;
And nothing 'gainst Time's scythe can make defence,
Save breed, to brave him when he takes thee hence.

XII. The world is a world of change and decay. Against Time's all-conquering power Mr. W. H. can make a successful defence only by begetting children to perpetuate his beauty.

2 *Hideous night.*—Cf. note on "hideous Winter," v. 6.

4 *All.*—Q. has "or." *O'er.*—Q. has "ore," which might possibly represent "are;" but "o'er" seems preferable.

7, 8 The pessimistic tendency which emerges in the expression just mentioned (lines 2 to 6) becomes still more apparent when harvest-home is transmuted into a funeral, and the waggon laden with ripened corn becomes a *bier* bearing the aged dead. Contrast with this, "Thou shalt come to [thy] grave in a full age, like as a shock of corn cometh in in his season," Job v. 26, A. V.

9 *Question make.*—Feel a doubt whether it will not be that, &c.

10 *The wastes of Time.*—The things devastated and destroyed by Time.

11 *Do themselves forsake.*—Wane and disappear, leaving behind their former excellence.

14 *Save breed, to brave him.*—"Except children whose youth may set the scythe of Time at defiance," Malone.

XIII.

O THAT you were yourself! but, love, you are
No longer yours, than you yourself here live:
Against this coming end you should prepare,
And your sweet semblance to some other give.
So should that beauty which you hold in lease
Find no determination: then you were
Yourself again, after yourself's decease,
When your sweet issue your sweet form should bear.
Who lets so fair a house fall to decay,
Which husbandry in honour might uphold
Against the stormy gusts of winter's day,
And barren rage of death's eternal cold?
O, none but unthrifts:—Dear my love, you know
You had a father; let your son say so.

XIII. Would that Mr. W. H. were truly master of himself, truly his own! But this mastery and possession, as being, like all other men, subject to Death, it is not possible for him to attain. He may, however, live on in his children; and he is advised thus to perpetuate the honour of his house.

1 *Yourself.*—The Quarto of 1609, in accordance with the usage of the time, gives "your selfe" as two words. This allows of an emphasis being thrown on the "your," which seems here required; the sense in all probability being, "O that you were truly your own possession!" Cf. "another self," x. 13; "next self," cxxxiii. 6.

5 *Lease.*—Mr. W. H. is a leaseholder of his comely form, not a freeholder.

6 *Determination.*—In accordance with common legal phraseology.

7 *Yourself.*—Q. has "You selfe."

8 *Sweet issue—sweet form.*—The employment of "sweet," here and elsewhere in these Sonnets, however much out of harmony with present usage, was in accord with the custom of the times. The same word, for example, is used of the Earl of Pembroke (W. H.) by John Davies of Hereford in his *Witte's Pilgrimage*:—"So so (sweete Lord) so should it bee," &c.

9 *So fair a house* must be referred to Mr. W. H.'s ancestry, not to the bodily house ("beauteous roof" of x. 7). The words might be very well used of an eldest son and heir, even though he might not be an only son.

10–12 Due care and attention might preserve the house against the storms of winter, the cold blasts of death.

14 *You had a father.*—In accordance with the general drift of this and preceding Sonnets, the meaning must be, not that Mr. W. H.'s father was dead, but that he should do as his father did, that is, beget a son. Cf. especially *Merry Wives*, Act iii. sc. 4, line 36, where Shallow, urging Slender to woo Anne Page in manly fashion—to do as his father did—says, "She's coming, to her, Coz. O boy, *thou hadst a father*," a hint which, however, Slender misunderstands. Cf. also *Merchant of Venice*, Act ii. sc. 2, lines 17 to 19, where Launcelot says, "My father *did* something smack, . . . he *had* a kind of taste," though Gobbo is just about to make his appearance. To these passages my attention was directed by the Rev. W. A. Harrison. Cf. Introd., chap. vii. p. 50.

XIV.

Not from the stars do I my judgment pluck;
And yet methinks I have astronomy,
But not to tell of good, or evil luck,
Of plagues, of dearths, or season's quality:
Nor can I fortune to brief minutes tell,
Pointing to each his thunder, rain, and wind,
Or say, with princes if it shall go well,
By oft predict that I in heaven find:
But from thine eyes my knowledge I derive,
And, constant stars, in them I read such art,
As truth and beauty shall together thrive,
If from thyself to store thou wouldst convert:
Or else of thee this I prognosticate,
Thy end is truth's and beauty's doom and date.

XIV. The poet is an astrologer, though he neither consults the stars above, nor is concerned with the same matters as common astrologers. The poet's stars are the bright eyes of his friend. From these he can predict that, unless the counsel given in these Sonnets is followed, both truth and beauty will come to an end at his friend's death.

1 *Pluck.*—Derive, take.

2 *Astronomy.*—Here equivalent to astrology, as we now use the latter word.

5, 6 *Fortune to brief minutes tell, Pointing to each his thunder, rain, and wind.*—Indicate, concerning different kinds of weather, the exact duration of each.

9, 10 *Thine eyes—constant stars.*—The reader may compare Sidney's *Astrophel and Stella*, xxvi., "Astrologie:"—

> "Though dustie wits doe scorne Astrologie,
> And fooles can thinke those lampes of purest light
> . . . . . .
> To haue for no cause birthright in the sky
> But for to spangle the blacke weeds of Night;
> . . . . . .
> For me I do Nature vnidle know,
> Who oft foresee my after following race,
> By only those two starres in Stella's face."

10 *I read such art.*—My art draws such inferences.

12 *If from thyself—thou wouldst convert.*—If thou wouldst change thy aim and not regard merely thyself. *Store.*—Cf. xi. 9, and note.

XV.

When I consider everything that grows
Holds in perfection but a little moment,
That this huge stage presenteth nought but shows
Whereon the stars in secret influence comment;
When I perceive that men as plants increase,
Cheered and check'd even by the self-same sky;
Vaunt in their youthful sap, at height decrease,
And wear their brave state out of memory;
Then the conceit of this inconstant stay
Sets you most rich in youth before my sight,
Where wasteful Time debateth with Decay,
To change your day of youth to sullied night;
And, all in war with Time, for love of you,
As he takes from you, I engraft you new.

XV. Perfection endures but a brief moment. Whatever the earth produces has no sooner attained maturity than it tends to decay. The poet, mindful that his friend must submit to the universal law, resists the encroachments of Time, ever "engrafting" anew his friend's excellences, transcribing them indelibly into an enduring record. Here the counsel to beget offspring is wanting. Probably, however, xv. and xvi. were to be taken together.

[3] *This huge stage.*—Cf. *As You Like It*, Act ii. sc. 7, lines 139 *sqq.*, "All the world's a stage," &c.; *Merchant of Venice*, Act i. sc. 1, line 77:—

> "I hold the world but as the world, Gratiano,
> A stage where every man must play a part;"

and *Tempest*, Act iv. sc. 1, lines 152–6:—

> "The cloud-capp'd towers, the gorgeous palaces,
> The solemn temples, the great globe itself,
> Yea, all which it inherit, shall dissolve,
> And, like this insubstantial pageant faded,
> Leave not a rack behind."

[4] *Comment.*—The meaning probably is, that as the annotation of a commentator runs parallel with the text, so the influence of the stars corresponds with the course of things in the world.

[5, 6] These lines would seem to refer, not so much to occult astrological influence, as to the effect produced by varying seasons and weather.

[7] *Vaunt.*—Meaning not improbably "mount proudly upward." Cf. *Troilus and Cressida*, Prologue, line 27,—"Leaps o'er the vaunt and first-lings of these broils," where "vaunt" must mean the beginning and early course.

[8] *Wear.*—Implying a gradual transition till the "brave state"—state of luxuriant maturity—is forgotten and "out of memory."

[9] *Conceit.*—Thought, contemplation.

XVI.

But wherefore do not you a mightier way
Make war upon this bloody tyrant, Time?
And fortify yourself in your decay
With means more blessed than my barren rhyme?
Now stand you on the top of happy hours;
And many maiden gardens, yet unset,
With virtuous wish would bear you living flowers,
Much liker than your painted counterfeit:
So should the lines of life that life repair,
Which this (Time's pencil, or my pupil pen),
Neither in inward worth, nor outward fair,
Can make you live yourself in eyes of men.
To give away yourself, keeps yourself still;
And you must live, drawn by your own sweet skill.

XVI. But Mr. W. H., in his children, can give a far more perfect record of his excellences than the poet can possibly make in his Sonnets. The living portrayal which may thus be drawn surpasses every written record, and the "counterfeit painted by the hand of the artist."

2 *This bloody tyrant, Time.*—Similarly in v. 3 the Hours are spoken of as "playing the tyrants."

5 *On the top of happy hours.*—In the perfection of joyous youth, which can last but a brief space.

6 *Maiden gardens.*—A slight variation from the agricultural imagery of iii. 6.

9 *The lines of life*, &c.—I was inclined to take these words as referring to the wrinkles on the brow of advancing life (cf. xix. 10), and to suppose the meaning to be, that declining age is compensated for by the growing beauty and maturing perfection of children. But, having regard to the general drift of the Sonnet, to the "painted counterfeit" of line 8, and to the words "You must live, drawn by your own sweet skill" (14), I now assent to the interpretation of the "lines of life" as children in whom Mr. W. H. is supposed to have himself portrayed his mental and bodily excellences.

10 *Time's pencil.*—Dr. Furnivall has suggested that this expression is used generally of such written records of the time as may refer to Mr. W. H. This view seems to me correct; and it is well worthy of note that in the Quarto, which, in this particular, I have followed, the words "Time's pencil or my pupil pen" are bracketed together. The record of "Time's pencil" would thus be of a similar kind to that made by the poet's "pupil pen." A reason may also thus be assigned for the use of the word "pupil," as implying that the record in these Sonnets was subordinate to the general record or chronicle of the period. *This*, in "this (Time's pencil, or my pupil pen)," may be taken as meaning "any written record of this kind," whether by "Time's pencil," &c.

XVII.

Who will believe my verse in time to come,
If it were fill'd with your most high deserts?
Though yet Heaven knows it is but as a tomb
Which hides your life, and shows not half your parts.
If I could write the beauty of your eyes,
And in fresh numbers number all your graces,
The age to come would say, 'This poet lies,
Such heavenly touches ne'er touch'd earthly faces.'
So should my papers, yellowed with their age,
Be scorn'd, like old men of less truth than tongue;
And your true rights be term'd a poet's rage,
And stretched metre of an antique song:
  But were some child of yours alive that time,
  You should live twice,—in it, and in my rhyme.

XVII. The poet's record is, moreover, open to two objections; it is very imperfect, and, besides, posterity would not believe a full and accurate description of Mr. W. H.'s beauty, even if such a description were made. But the living record is open to no such objections; and, besides, it would confer an immortality additional to that given by the poet's verses.

2 *Fill'd.*—Q. has "fild."

6 *In fresh numbers.*—Meaning probably "in successive new poems," rather than "in new metres."

11 *A poet's rage.*—The product of poetical enthusiasm.

12 *Stretched metre.*—Mere inflated words. Q. has the spelling "miter."

XVIII.

Shall I compare thee to a summer's day?
Thou art more lovely and more temperate:
Rough winds do shake the darling buds of May,
And summer's lease hath all too short a date:
Sometime too hot the eye of heaven shines,
And often is his gold complexion dimm'd;
And every fair from fair sometime declines,
By chance, or nature's changing course, untrimm'd;
But thy eternal summer shall not fade,
Nor lose possession of that fair thou ow'st;
Nor shall Death brag thou wander'st in his shade,
When in eternal lines to time thou grow'st;
So long as men can breathe, or eyes can see,
So long lives this, and this gives life to thee.

XVIII. If the poet were to compare his friend to a summer day, the comparison would be a depreciation of his excellence. And summer, too, must fade away; but through these Sonnets Mr. W. H. is assured of immortality so long as the race of men endures. The greatly increased power to confer immortality here attributed to the poet's verses may be noted, as showing not improbably that here a new group of Sonnets commences, extending to xxvi.

3 *May.*—"A summer month; we must remember that May in Shakspere's time ran on to within a few days of our mid-June."—Dowden, *ad loc.*

5 *The eye of heaven.*—The sun. Cf. xxxiii. 2.

7 *Every fair from fair.*—Everything beautiful from beauty.

8 *Untrimm'd.*—Its beauty marred or despoiled.

10 *That fair thou ow'st.*—That beauty thou ownest.

12 *To time thou grow'st.*—Thy fame increasing with the progress of time; keeping pace with time.

XIX.

Devouring Time, blunt thou the lion's paws,
And make the earth devour her own sweet brood ;
Pluck the keen teeth from the fierce tiger's jaws,
And burn the long-liv'd phœnix in her blood ;
Make glad and sorry seasons, as thou fleet'st,
And do whate'er thou wilt, swift-footed Time,
To the wide world, and all her fading sweets ;
But I forbid thee one most heinous crime :
O carve not with thy hours my love's fair brow,
Nor draw no lines there with thine antique pen ;
Him in thy course untainted do allow,
For beauty's pattern to succeeding men.
Yet do thy worst, old Time : despite thy wrong,
My love shall in my verse ever live young.

XIX. Mr. W. H.'s immortality is secured by the poet's verse against the possibility of being impaired by the utmost power of Time to destroy. In this Sonnet Time is first implored to restrain his power ; and then he is defied.

2 The earth "devours" what, on its decay, becomes again incorporated with the earth.

3 *Fierce tiger's jaws.*—Q. has "yawes."

4 "'Burned in her blood' may signify 'burnt alive.'"—Steevens.

10 *Thine antique pen.*—So called, apparently, as marking age on the countenance. In the previous line the effects of age are "carved" on the brow.

11 *Untainted.*—Without being faded or marred.

XX.

A WOMAN's face with Nature's own hand painted,
Hast thou, the master-mistress of my passion ;
A woman's gentle heart, but not acquainted
With shifting change, as is false women's fashion ;
An eye more bright than theirs, less false in rolling,
Gilding the object whereupon it gazeth ;
A man in hue, all hues in his controlling,
Which steals men's eyes, and women's souls amazeth.
And for a woman wert thou first created ;
Till Nature, as she wrought thee, fell a-doting,
And by addition me of thee defeated,
By adding one thing to my purpose nothing.
But since she prick'd thee out for women's pleasure,
Mine be thy love, and thy love's use their treasure.

XX. The poet's friend has the beauty and tenderness of a woman, but without faults which are common in women. Evidence as to the nature of the poet's "passion," if such were needed, is given by lines 11 to 14.

2 *Master-mistress.*—An expression evidently used on account of the poet's dedicating his Sonnets to a male friend, instead of the mistress usually addressed by the sonnetteers.

5 *Less false in rolling.*—Cf. cxxxix. 6 ; cxl. 14.

6 *Gilding the object,* &c.—Like the sun. Cf. xxxiii. 1–4.

7 *A man in hue, all hues.*—The word "hue" has in our day a sense more restricted than it had in Shakespeare's time, when it could be employed to indicate "form" or "appearance." The lines from Spenser, *Fairy Queen*, Bk. v. canto ix., have been quoted :—

> "Then gan it run away incontinent,
> Being returned to his former hew."

The notion that "hues," as printed in the Quarto "*Hews,*" was intended to indicate a certain Mr. William Hughes, otherwise unknown, as the Mr. W. H. of the Dedication, scarcely needs to be refuted. *Controlling.*—Rendering all others subordinate ; surpassing them.

XXI.

So is it not with me as with that Muse,
Stirr'd by a painted beauty to his verse ;
Who heaven itself for ornament doth use,
And every fair with his fair doth rehearse ;
Making a couplement of proud compare,
With sun and moon, with earth and sea's rich gems,
With April's first-born flowers, and all things rare
That heaven's air in this huge rondure hems.
O let me, true in love, but truly write,
And then believe me, my love is as fair
As any mother's child, though not so bright
As those gold candles fix'd in heaven's air :
Let them say more that like of hearsay well ;
I will not praise, that purpose not to sell.

XXI. It is not necessary for the poet to flatter his friend, or to follow the example of other poets, who, inspired by meretricious charms, indulge in extravagant comparisons. There is none born of woman more beautiful than Mr. W. H., though, in its brightness, his beauty is not comparable to that of the stars, whose brightness is of a different nature.

1, 2 The muse is identified with the poet in question. As to the words "painted beauty," cf. xx. 1. Possibly some particular poet may be intended.

4 *Every fair with his fair*, &c.—Compares everything beautiful with the beauty which he celebrates. Cf. xviii. 7.

5 *Couplement.*—Represented in Q. by "cooplement." *Of proud compare.*—Coupling, in his exalted and inflated comparisons, the beauty which he celebrates with objects specified in the three following lines.

8 *This huge rondure.*—Possibly the vast circumference of the limiting horizon, or possibly the vault of heaven. On the whole, the former sense seems the more probable.

12 *Gold candles.* Cf. *Merchant of Venice*, Act v. sc. 1, lines 58, 59 :—

"Look how the floor of heaven
Is thick inlaid with patines of bright gold."

13 *That like of hearsay well.*—Who are pleased with idle and extravagant talk. The "of," in our present idiom, would be redundant.

14 *I will not praise*, &c.—I will not indulge in extravagant laudation, as sellers do, wishing to part with what they praise. Cf. *Passionate Pilgrim*, 19 :—

"But plainly say thou lov'st her well,
And set her person forth to sell."

Also *Troilus and Cressida*, Act iv. sc. 1, line 78, "We'll not commend what we intend to sell." Paris here speaks ; but it would not seem that he really wanted to part with Helen. If he did, he would do as vendors do. He intends to sell only at a costly price, by the fortune of war.

XXII.

My glass shall not persuade me I am old,
So long as youth and thou are of one date;
But when in thee time's furrows I behold,
Then look I death my days should expiate.
For all that beauty that doth cover thee,
Is but the seemly raiment of my heart,
Which in thy breast doth live, as thine in me;
How can I then be elder than thou art?
O therefore, love, be of thyself so wary,
As I not for myself but for thee will;
Bearing thy heart, which I will keep so chary
As tender nurse her babe from faring ill.
Presume not on thy heart when mine is slain;
Thou gav'st me thine, not to give back again.

XXII. The poet can see some traces of advancing age when he looks in a mirror; but he is united so closely to his friend, that he will not believe that he is himself old, while his friend is in the bloom of youthful beauty. They have exchanged hearts. In what is said of the poet's heart being slain, Professor Dowden sees some indication of a wrong which had been committed by the poet's friend. If this view is correct, the wrong (the nature of which is to come out afterwards) must have been committed, it would seem, very soon after the commencement of the friendship.

4 *Expiate.*—Bring to a close, finish.—Schmidt's *Lex.* Malone compared *King Richard III.*, Act iii. sc. 3, line 23, "Make haste; the hour of death is expiate."

5 *All the beauty,* &c.—The poet and his friend have exchanged hearts; and so the poet's heart is clothed with the beautiful form of his friend.

9 *Be of thyself so wary.*—Since thou hast my heart in thy breast. A gentle hint, possibly, in accordance with what has been said above.

13 *When mine is slain.*—Meaning, possibly, slain by thy present course of conduct.

XXIII.

As an unperfect actor on the stage,
Who with his fear is put besides his part,
Or some fierce thing replete with too much rage,
Whose strength's abundance weakens his own heart;
So I, for fear of trust, forget to say
The perfect ceremony of love's rite,
And in mine own love's strength seem to decay,
O'ercharg'd with burthen of mine own love's might.
O let my books be then the eloquence
And dumb presagers of my speaking breast,
Who plead for love, and look for recompense,
More than that tongue that more hath more express'd.
O learn to read what silent love hath writ:
To hear with eyes belongs to love's fine wit.

XXIII. Overcome by nervous hesitancy and trepidation, the poet cannot declare all his love for his friend. His Sonnets must speak for him; but his love is greater than even these can express. This nervousness was probably not altogether a poet's fiction.

2 *Put besides his part.*—We now use the phrase "put out."

3, 4 *Or some fierce thing*, &c.—Or some fierce animal which has lost self-control.

5 It seems doubtful whether "for fear of trust" is to be regarded as meaning "fearing that I shall not be trusted," or "fearing to trust myself." Dowden takes the words in the latter sense. I prefer the former.

6 *The perfect ceremony*, &c.—The full and due expression of love. *Rite.*—Q. "right."

7, 8 Cf. lines 3, 4.

9 *My books.*—It has been supposed that the Sonnets were sent to Mr. W. H. in successive written books.

10 *Presagers.*—Meaning almost "interpreters," but also implying that the poet's love had *not yet* been altered.

11, 12 *Who plead*, &c.—Myself who plead for love, and a recompense greater (first "more" of line 12) than "that tongue" (the voice of my books) hath better (third "more") expressed than my voice could do that greater love and recompense ("that more") which I plead for. I have here adopted an interpretation suggested to me by Mr. G. Bernard Shaw. As to the construction, "my speaking breast, *who*," &c., cf. *Coriolanus*, Act iv. sc. 5, line 84, "Thou hast a heart of wreak in thee that *will* revenge."

13, 14 *Learn to read*, &c.—Learn to understand the full meaning of the love expressed in writing, and so "hear with eyes" the voice of the silent tongue. *With eyes.*—Q. "wit eies." *Wit.*—Q. "wiht."

XXIV.

Mine eye hath play'd the painter, and hath stell'd
Thy beauty's form in table of my heart;
My body is the frame wherein 'tis held,
And perspective it is best painter's art.
For through the painter must you see his skill,
To find where your true image pictur'd lies,
Which in my bosom's shop is hanging still,
That hath his windows glazed with thine eyes.
Now see what good turns eyes for eyes have done;
Mine eyes have drawn thy shape, and thine for me
Are windows to my breast, where-through the sun
Delights to peep, to gaze therein on thee;
Yet eyes this cunning want to grace their art,
They draw but what they see, know not the heart.

XXIV. Instead of the figurative exchange of hearts in xxii., the poet's breast is now a painter's studio, and his heart a tablet on which his sight has portrayed the form of his friend. And the poet is so truthful and sincere that the windows of his breast are the eyes of his friend, to whom the poet's heart is thus fully revealed. The concluding couplet would seem to indicate a doubt whether the friend's heart has been revealed with equal clearness.

[1] *Stell'd.*—Q. "steeld," the form of which may be right. To "steel" is possibly, as I think the Rev. W. A. Harrison suggested, to write with a steel point or stylus; and so the word may come to have a more general sense of portraying or depicting. Cf. however, *Lucrece*, 1444, "To find a face where all distress is stell'd" (Q. "steld"), meaning evidently "portrayed" or "depicted." We cannot, however, infer from "held," line 3 in this Sonnet, that "stell'd" is the true form in line 1, pronunciation having so considerably changed.

[3] *The frame.*—That is, of the picture, or just possibly the painting-frame, or easel. Cf. T. Watson, *Teares of Fancie* (1593), Sonnet 46:—

> "My Mistris seeing her faire counterfet
> So sweetelie framed in my bleeding brest:
> On it her fancie shee so fermelie set,
> Thinking her selfe for want of it distrest."

[4] *Perspective.*—As used here, the meaning of the word appears to be "capability of being looked through." But though this may be the sense immediately intended, yet there is a reference also to the ordinary employment of the word in relation to pictorial art, whether with respect

to the representation of distance, or of a picture so designed as to require to be looked at obliquely. Cf. *Richard II.*, Act ii. sc. 2, line 18 *seq.*:—

> "Like perspectives, which, rightly gazed upon,
> Show nothing but confusion; ey'd awry
> Distinguish form."

5 *Through the painter*, &c.—In the sense mentioned above. But there is probably an allusion, also, to the general necessity of taking the position occupied by an artist in painting a picture, so as to see, as it were, with his eyes.

11 *Are windows—where-through the sun.*—Notice the additional proof of sincerity. Not only are the friend's eyes windows to the poet's breast, seeing everything within, but the sun himself can look through.

14 *Know not the heart.*—Intimating possibly a suspicion in accordance with the last lines of xxii.

XXV.

Let those who are in favour with their stars,
Of public honour and proud titles boast,
Whilst I, whom fortune of such triumph bars,
Unlook'd for joy in that I honour most.
Great princes' favourites their fair leaves spread
But as the marigold at the sun's eye ;
And in themselves their pride lies buried,
For at a frown they in their glory die.
The painful warrior famoused for worth,
After a thousand victories once foil'd,
Is from the book of honour razed quite,
And all the rest forgot for which he toil'd :
Then happy I, that love and am beloved,
Where I may not remove, nor be removed.

XXV. The poet contrasts his position to that of the courtier whose glory depends on the smile or frown of a prince, or to that of the soldier whose honour and repute are lost through one defeat, after even a thousand victories. But the love between himself and his friend can feel no such reversal.

3 *Fortune of such triumph bars.*—A sentiment to be expressed afterwards more fully. Cf. *e.g.*, xxix., xxxvi., cxi.

4 *Unlook'd for.*—Disregarded and not sought for to receive distinction.

6 *The marigold.*—Cf. *Lucrece*, 397 *seq.*:—

> " Her eyes, like marigolds, had sheath'd their light,
> And, canopied in darkness, sweetly lay
> Till they might open to adorn the day."

Schmidt identifies the marigold here spoken of as "the flower Calendula pluvialis."

7 *And in themselves.*—Suddenly all display of glory is at an end, and they become, as it were, the tomb of their own former pride.

9 *Worth.*—The emendations "fight" and "might" have been proposed, or, leaving "worth" untouched, it has been suggested that "quite" (line 11) should be changed to "forth."

XXVI.

Lord of my love, to whom in vassalage
Thy merit hath my duty strongly knit,
To thee I send this written ambassage,
To witness duty, not to show my wit.
Duty so great, which wit so poor as mine
May make seem bare, in wanting words to show it;
But that I hope some good conceit of thine
In thy soul's thought, all naked, will bestow it:
Till whatsoever star that guides my moving,
Points on me graciously with fair aspéct,
And puts apparel on my tattered loving,
To show me worthy of thy sweet respect:
Then may I dare to boast how I do love thee,
Till then, not show my head where thou may'st prove me.

XXVI. Designed pretty evidently to conclude, and to accompany, when sent to Mr. W. H., either i. to xxv. or xviii. to xxv. There is a curious and interesting resemblance between this Sonnet and the dedication to *Lucrece*. Drake's argument (*Shakespeare and his Times*, 1817), that this resemblance gives evidence that it is Lord Southampton who is here addressed also, is certainly not conclusive. We have, however, obviously a colouring of plausibility given to the assertion that Mr. W. H. was a person of somewhat similarly high station.

1 *Vassalage.*—This word, like what is said in the sequel, is suited to the high station of Mr. W. H.

2 *Strongly knit.*—Malone compares the words of Iago in *Othello*, Act i. sc. 3, lines 335 *seq.*, "I confess me knit to thy deserving with cables of perdurable toughness;" and there are other parallels.

7, 8 The poet hopes that, when received into his friend's understanding, "some good conceit" on the part of his friend may bestow his "all-naked" verse. "Bestow" here seems to mean, not merely "lodge," but also "equip" and "clothe," like a naked wayfarer received as a guest. This agrees with the "putting apparel on my tattered loving" of line 11.

9 *My moving.*—The poet, it would appear, in accordance with following Sonnets, is about to commence a journey, probably of a professional nature. "My" must not be conjecturally changed to "by." He hopes that hereafter, under the benign influence of his guiding-star, he may be able to offer something more worthy of acceptance.

11 *Tattered.*—Q. has "tottered." Cf. ii. 4; also this "worthless poor totter'd volume."—Kemp's *Nine daies.*

12 *Thy sweet respect.*—Q. has "their sweet respect." *Respect.*—Regard, esteem.

XXVII.

Weary with toil, I haste me to my bed,
The dear repose for limbs with travel tired;
But then begins a journey in my head,
To work my mind, when body's work's expired:
For then my thoughts (from far where I abide)
Intend a zealous pilgrimage to thee,
And keep my drooping eyelids open wide,
Looking on darkness which the blind do see:
Save that my soul's imaginary sight
Presents thy shadow to my sightless view,
Which, like a jewel hung in ghastly night,
Makes black night beauteous, and her old face new.
Lo, thus, by day my limbs, by night my mind,
For thee, and for myself, no quiet find.

XXVII. The poet is at a distance from his friend on a journey; and when his body rests at night, then begins a mental pilgrimage to his friend, which keeps his eyes from sleep. The night, however, acquires a new beauty, when he sees his friend's image in the darkness.

4 *To work my mind.*—To set my mind at work; or, my mind begins to work.

6 *Intend.*—Direct onwards.

7 *My drooping eyelids.*—My eyelids, which otherwise would fain close in sleep.

8 *Which the blind do see.*—Equally with those whose eyesight is not impaired.

10 *Thy.*—Q. gives "their" instead of "thy," probably from a misunderstood abbreviation. *Shadow.*—Image, as elsewhere.

11, 12 *Like a jewel*, &c.—*Romeo and Juliet*, Act i. sc. 5, lines 47, 48, has been compared:—

> "It seems she hangs upon the cheek of night
> Like a rich jewel in an Æthiop's ear."

13, 14 There must be a change of order to give the sense; and then we have, "By day, my limbs for myself; by night, my mind for thee, no quiet find."

XXVIII.

How can I then return in happy plight,
That am debarr'd the benefit of rest?
When day's oppression is not eas'd by night,
But day by night and night by day oppress'd?
And each, though enemies to either's reign,
Do in consent shake hands to torture me,
The one by toil, the other to complain
How far I toil, still farther off from thee.
I tell the day, to please him, thou art bright,
And dost him grace when clouds do blot the heaven:
So flatter I the swart-complexion'd night;
When sparkling stars twire not, thou gild'st the even.
But day doth daily draw my sorrows longer,
And night doth nightly make grief's length seem stronger.

XXVIII. The poet on his journey is going farther and farther from his friend. Grieving for the temporary separation, and oppressed both by day and night, how can he hope to return in a happy and prosperous condition?

1–4 As to the "oppression" here spoken of, see the preceding Sonnet, lines 1 to 7.

7, 8 *The one by toil*, &c.—Day inflicts pain by the toil of journeying, and night by the leisure afforded for reflecting how much farther the poet is separated from his friend by the day's journey.

11 *Swart.*—Swarthy, dark. Cf. *Comedy of Errors*, Act iii. sc. 2, line 104, "Swart, like my shoe;" and *Henry VI.*, First Part, Act i. sc. 2, line 84, "And whereas I was black and swart before."

12 *Twire.*—To peep, and so, possibly, to twinkle, both peeping and twinkling being intermittent. Dowden quotes, "I saw the wench that twired and twinkled at thee the other day."—Beaumont and Fletcher, *Woman Pleased*, Act iv. sc. 1; and "Which maids will twire at, 'tween their fingers thus."—Ben Jonson, *Sad Shepherd*, Act ii. sc. 1. The Rev. W. A. Harrison observes, "Two meanings of 'twire' are found in old writers, (*a*) that of 'chirp' or 'twitter,' used of birds; (*b*) that given above, 'to peep or look out at intervals,' as the stars twinkling; cf. Isaiah (E.V.) x. 14." In this passage of Isaiah the Hebrew word *metsaphtseph*, translated "peeped," is used of the chirping of young birds in the nest: "And there was none that moved the wing, or opened the mouth, or peeped." *Gild'st.*—Q. "guil'st."

XXIX.

When in disgrace with fortune and men's eyes,
I all alone beweep my outcast state,
And trouble deaf heaven with my bootless cries,
And look upon myself, and curse my fate,
Wishing me like to one more rich in hope,
Featur'd like him, like him with friends possess'd,
Desiring this man's art, and that man's scope,
With what I most enjoy contented least;
Yet in these thoughts myself almost despising,
Haply I think on thee;—and then my state,
Like to the lark at break of day arising
From sullen earth, sings hymns at heaven's gate;
For thy sweet love remember'd, such wealth brings,
That then I scorn to change my state with kings.

XXIX. This Sonnet, and those following as far as xxxii., have been regarded as written in the same period of absence (so Furnivall, *Leopold Shakspere*); and Dowden takes them as giving the night-thoughts previously alluded to (xxviii.). In xxix. the poet reflects on his lack of Fortune's gifts, and his "outcast state," so that he becomes almost despicable in his own eyes. But despondency changes to exultation when he thinks of his friend. This Sonnet, with its mention of Shakespeare's "outcast state," &c., would be very suitable to the supposition that he was on a provincial tour as an actor. Cf. cxi.

7 *Art* here can scarcely be the actor's art, but rather knowledge or literary skill. *Scope.*—Probably range of thought and power of expression.

8 On this line Dowden remarks, "The preceding line makes it not improbable that Shakspere is here speaking of his own poems." "Enjoy," it would seem, must be taken as pretty nearly equivalent to "possess."

11, 12 The words of the song in *Cymbeline*, Act ii. sc. 3, lines 21, 22, have been justly compared:—

> "Hark! hark! the lark at heaven's gate sings,
> And Phœbus 'gins arise."

13 *Such wealth.*—Implying perhaps that the poet had been thinking of his poverty. Cf. xxxvii. and cxi.

XXX.

When to the sessions of sweet silent thought
I summon up remembrance of things past,
I sigh the lack of many a thing I sought,
And with old woes new wail my dear time's waste:
Then can I drown an eye, unus'd to flow,
For precious friends hid in death's dateless night,
And weep afresh love's long-since cancell'd woe,
And moan the expense of many a vanish'd sight.
Then can I grieve at grievances fore-gone,
And heavily from woe to woe tell o'er
The sad account of fore-bemoaned moan,
Which I new pay as if not paid before.
But if the while I think on thee, dear friend,
All losses are restor'd, and sorrows end.

XXX. Reflections on disappointments and bereavements, which, however, are compensated for by the love of his friend.

[1] Malone compares the use of "session" in *Othello*, Act iii. sc. 3, line 140.

[3] Regret for disappointed hopes and expectations.

[4] *My dear time's waste.*—The things or persons devastated or destroyed by Time, which were dear to me.

[6] *Dateless.*—Knowing nothing of date or time; and so the word may be used for endless.

[8] *Moan the expense*, &c.—Moan over what the loss of "precious friends" cost me in sorrow. Dowden connects this line with 11 and 12, the paying anew "the sad account of fore-bemoaned moan."

[9] *Fore-gone.*—Previously endured.

XXXI.

THY bosom is endeared with all hearts,
Which I by lacking have supposed dead;
And there reigns love and all love's loving parts,
And all those friends which I thought buried.
How many a holy and obsequious tear
Hath dear religious love stolen from mine eye,
As interest of the dead, which now appear
But things remov'd, that hidden in thee lie!
Thou art the grave where buried love doth live,
Hung with the trophies of my lovers gone,
Who all their parts of me to thee did give;
That due of many now is thine alone:
Their images I lov'd I view in thee,
And thou (all they) hast all the all of me.

XXXI. This Sonnet is a continuation of xxx., the last two lines of which it expands. In his friend the poet finds again all those dear to him whose loss he had lamented.

[1] Thy bosom is endeared to me by its having within it all hearts.

[2] There they are alive, though they had been regarded as dead.

[3] *All love's loving parts.*—Alluding to the varied manifestations of affection displayed by the poet's deceased friends.

[5, 6] Describe the sacred and reverent character of the poet's affection for his departed friends. *Obsequious.*—Dutiful; cf. "obsequious sorrow."—*Hamlet*, Act i. sc. 2, line 92.

[7] *As interest of the dead.*—As that to which the dead had a rightful claim. Cf. "interest" in lxxiv. 3.

[8] *But things remov'd.*—They had but gone to take up their abode in his friend's breast. *Thee.*—Q. "there."

[9] *Thou art the grave*, &c.—The imagery is suddenly changed, and if the poet's deceased friends are still alive, they live, as it were, in the grave.

[10] *Hung with the trophies.*—As in a church or cathedral, above the tombs of the dead.

[11] Represents the greatness of his present affection as comprising all the separate parts due respectively to his former friends.

[14] Emphasises 12. *Thou* art (*all they*), and *hast all the all of me.* Notice the strength of "all the all," instead of "all their parts of me."

XXXII.

If thou survive my well-contented day,
When that churl Death my bones with dust shall cover,
And shalt by fortune once more re-survey
These poor rude lines of thy deceased lover,
Compare them with the bettering of the time;
And though they be outstripp'd by every pen,
Reserve them for my love, not for their rhyme,
Exceeded by the height of happier men.
O then vouchsafe me but this loving thought:
'Had my friend's muse grown with this growing age,
A dearer birth than this his love had brought,
To march in ranks of better equipage:
But since he died, and poets better prove,
Theirs for their style I'll read, his for his love.'

XXXII. In accordance with the view of Furnivall and Dowden, this Sonnet is probably the *Envoy* to the series xxvii–xxxii. As the poet has survived many of his former friends (cf. two preceding Sonnets), so Mr. W. H. may survive the poet. And in time to come there may be a general improvement of poetical style. But this improved style will not express a greater intensity of affection. Cf. however, on this Sonnet, Introd., chap. vi. § 1, p. 36.

1 *My well-contented day.*—If this expression implies satisfaction with the world, then there is a marked difference of feeling between this Sonnet and others following, *e.g.* lxvi. The expression "well-contented" may, however, be understood possibly as implying that the poet would, whenever the summons to depart may come, desire no further prolongation of a life which was not to be coveted. But, in the case of poems like these Sonnets, there need be little difficulty in admitting a variation in the feeling expressed.

2 *That churl Death.*—Cf. *Hamlet*, Act v. sc. 2, lines 347, 348.

> "This fell sergeant, Death,
> Is strict in his arrest."

3 "And if perchance thou shalt again look over."

4 *Lover.*—An expression not unsuitable between men according to the fashion of the time.

7 *Reserve them.*—Still keep them.

8 *Happier men.*—Poets more successful in thought or expression.

11 *A dearer birth.*—A more valuable poetical product.

12 *To march*, &c.—To keep pace with the time in the outward garb and adornment of literary style. As to the allusion here to certain lines of Marston's, see Introd., chap. vi. § 1.

XXXIII.

Full many a glorious morning have I seen
Flatter the mountain-tops with sovereign eye,
Kissing with golden face the meadows green,
Gilding pale streams with heavenly alchymy ;
Anon permit the basest clouds to ride
With ugly rack on his celestial face,
And from the forlorn world his visage hide,
Stealing unseen to west with this disgrace :
Even so my sun one early morn did shine,
With all triumphant splendour on my brow ;
But out ! alack ! he was but one hour mine,
The region cloud hath mask'd him from me now.
Yet him for this my love no whit disdaineth ;
Suns of the world may stain, when heaven's sun staineth.

XXXIII. Now, we may suppose, begins another series of Sonnets. During Shakespeare's absence, possibly, Mr. W. H. had become unduly intimate with the poet's female friend, the dark lady of cxxvii., &c. On the poet's return there was some manifestation of estrangement on the part of Mr. W. H. The friendship, previously, had been like a glorious summer morning, but now the sun's face is hidden by dense storm-clouds. Still the poet will not renounce his friend in despair. The sky may again become clear.

4 *Heavenly alchymy.*—Steevens compares *King John*, Act iii. sc. 1, lines 77, 78 :—

> "The glorious sun
> Stays in his course, and plays the alchymist."

6 *With ugly rack.*—With dark threatening masses of vapour. Cf. *Hamlet*, Act ii. sc. 2, lines 505, 506 :—

> "But, as we often see against the storm,
> A silence in the heaven, the rack stand still."

12 *The region cloud.*—The cloud in the airy region above. But it has been thought that the word "region" in the text is to be referred to the language of ancient astrology or divination, though here it has lost that special sense. Cf. *Hamlet*, Act ii. sc. 2, lines 508, 509 :—

> "Anon the dreadful thunder
> Doth rend the region."

As to the general sense, cf. *Two Gentlemen of Verona*, Act i. sc. 3, lines 84–87 :—

> "Oh, how this spring of love resembleth
> The uncertain glory of an April day,
> Which now shows all the beauty of the sun,
> And by-and-by a cloud takes all away."

XXXIV.

Why didst thou promise such a beauteous day,
And make me travel forth without my cloak,
To let base clouds o'ertake me in my way,
Hiding thy bravery in their rotten smoke?
'Tis not enough that through the cloud thou break,
To dry the rain on my storm-beaten face,
For no man well of such a salve can speak
That heals the wound, and cures not the disgrace:
Nor can thy shame give physic to my grief;
Though thou repent, yet I have still the loss:
The offender's sorrow lends but weak relief
To him that bears the strong offence's [cross].
Ah, but those tears are pearl which thy love sheds,
And they are rich, and ransom all ill deeds.

XXXIV. Imagery similar to that of the last Sonnet is used, and the poet again contrasts the dark storm-clouds with the promise of the early morning. The sun, however, is beginning to break through the clouds; the poet's friend shows signs of penitence. But tears shed after the offence had been committed could give no adequate relief. Still, on second thoughts, the poet pronounces these tears a rich treasure and a full satisfaction.

3 *Base clouds.*—The clouds are "base" on account of their dampness defacing and obscuring the glory of the heavens. Cf. the preceding Sonnet, lines 5, 6, and note.

4 *Bravery.*—Glory and splendour. *Rotten smoke.*—Meaning possibly damp, unwholesome vapour. Steevens compares "the reek o' the rotten fins."—*Coriolanus*, Act iii. sc. 3, line 121. "Rotten," however, may here mean "loose," "wanting in coherence."

6 *To dry the rain*, &c.—Continuing the imagery of the last Sonnet, according to which the poet had been overtaken by a storm.

12 [*Cross*].—Q. has "losse," which may possibly have remained by oversight on a revision of the MS.

13 *Sheds.*—Q. "sheeds."

XXXV.

No more be griev'd at that which thou hast done :
Roses have thorns, and silver fountains mud ;
Clouds and eclipses stain both moon and sun,
And loathsome canker lives in sweetest bud.
All men make faults, and even I in this,
Authorizing thy trespass with compare,
Myself corrupting, salving thy amiss,
Excusing thy sins more than thy sins are.
For to thy sensual fault I bring in sense,
(Thy adverse party is thy advocate)
And 'gainst myself a lawful plea commence :
Such civil war is in my love and hate,
That I an accessary needs must be
To that sweet thief, which sourly robs from me.

XXXV. The poet dissuades his friend from further grief. All men are imperfect, and imperfection or evil is associated with what is beautiful and glorious. The poet is himself in fault, making, on behalf of his friend, such excuses as would be justified only in the case of a greater offence. Though wronged, the poet's love and esteem compel him to become the advocate of his opponent (and friend) in the "civil war" (line 12), that is, in the conflict of which the poet is conscious within.

3 *Stain.*—Overshadow and darken. Cf. xxxiii. 14.

6 *Authorizing thy trespass with compare.*—By comparing thy fault to the "loathsome canker"—the worm that eats up the blossom, I really give the fault a sanction ("authorizing" it); for it sinks into insignificance and disappears altogether when such extravagant comparison is made.

7 *Myself corrupting.*—By unduly esteeming the offence against me, I foster an excessive sense of my own importance. *Salving thy amiss,*—by the comparisons previously mentioned.

8 Q. has "their" instead of "thy" twice.

9 *Sense.*—Probably sense of thy true worth and consideration of the circumstances.

10 *Thy adverse party*, &c.—The plaintiff becomes advocate for the defendant.

11 *A lawful plea.*—A plea as in a lawsuit.

12 *Love and hate.*—Hatred on account of the wrong inflicted was in antagonism to love for Mr. W. H.'s real worth.

13 *Accessary,*—as Q. Accéssory is unsuitable.

14 *Sourly.*—With no proper display of kindly feeling, harshly. Cf. xli. 8.

XXXVI.

Let me confess that we two must be twain,
Although our undivided loves are one :
So shall those blots that do with me remain,
Without thy help, by me be borne alone.
In our two loves there is but one respect,
Though in our lives a separable spite,
Which though it alter not love's sole effect,
Yet doth it steal sweet hours from love's delight.
I may not evermore acknowledge thee,
Lest my bewailed guilt should do thee shame ;
Nor thou with public kindness honour me,
Unless thou take that honour from thy name :
But do not so ; I love thee in such sort,
As thou being mine, mine is thy good report.

XXXVI. The self-disparagement of the last Sonnet becomes more intense. Instead of the conduct of Mr. W. H. rendering him unworthy of the poet's friendship, it is the poet's "bewailed guilt," the "blots" on his character, which must prevent any public recognition of the acquaintance, and which require that the intimate association should be dissevered. In extenuating in the previous Sonnet Mr. W. H.'s offence, the poet had taken into account his superior social standing. Hence what here follows. Shakespeare very likely felt that the concession he had made was unsuitable and degrading.

3 *Those blots.*—We ought probably to understand this expression, as well as the "bewailed guilt" of line 10, not of moral turpitude, but of the professional occupation and lower social standing of the poet.

5 *But one respect.*—Perfect similarity.

6 *In our lives a separable spite.*—The "spite" of Fortune (xxxvii. 3) having placed us in such diverse social circumstances as must involve separation.

7 *Love's sole effect.*—The power and efficiency of love, apart from external circumstances.

8 *Steal sweet hours*, &c.—On account of the expression of love being hindered.

13, 14 The poet dissuades Mr. W. H. from publicly recognising the acquaintance, so that his social consideration may not be thereby compromised.

XXXVII.

As a decrepit father takes delight
To see his active child do deeds of youth,
So I, made lame by Fortune's dearest spite,
Take all my comfort of thy worth and truth;
For whether beauty, birth, or wealth, or wit,
Or any of these all, or all, or more,
Intitled in thy parts do crowned sit,
I make my love ingrafted to this store:
So then I am not lame, poor, nor despised,
Whilst that this shadow doth such substance give,
That I in thy abundance am sufficed,
And by a part of all thy glory live.
Look what is best, that best I wish in thee;
This wish I have; then ten times happy me!

XXXVII. The poet's previous self-disparagement must be kept in view in order to the true understanding of this Sonnet. The "blots" and "bewailed guilt" previously spoken of here pass into an imagined decrepitude and lameness. But all defect is compensated for by the advantages and excellences of his friend, with whom affection closely unites him.

3 *Made lame.*—There is little or no difficulty about this lameness being metaphorical, as may be seen by considering the connection of thought, and comparing the following passages, to which my attention was directed by the Rev. W. A. Harrison:—"Come, lame me with reasons;" "Then there were two cousins laid up; when the one should be lamed with reasons, and the other mad without any" (*As You Like It*, Act i. sc. 3, lines 6–10); "That their limbs may halt as lamely as their manners" (*Timon*, Act iv. sc. 1, lines 24, 25). *Dearest spite.*—Cf. "Would I had met my dearest foe in heaven" (*Hamlet*, Act i. sc. 2, line 182).

7 *Intitled in thy parts*, &c.—The various endowments of the poet's friend are spoken of as though each were a monarch reigning in its own domain with just title. The word *crowned* describes their pre-eminence. Q. reads "their" instead of "thy."

8 *Ingrafted.*—So closely united as to enable the poet, in imagination, to share in his friend's advantages. Cf. line 12.

10 *This shadow,—i.e.* of the imagination, this fancied union.

XXXVIII.

How can my muse want subject to invent,
While thou dost breathe, that pour'st into my verse
Thine own sweet argument, too excellent
For every vulgar paper to rehearse?
O, give thy self the thanks, if aught in me
Worthy perusal stand against thy sight;
For who's so dumb that cannot write to thee,
When thou thyself dost give invention light?
Be thou the tenth muse, ten times more in worth
Than those old nine, which rhymers invocate;
And he that calls on thee, let him bring forth
Eternal numbers to outlive long date.
If my slight muse do please these curious days,
The pain be mine, but thine shall be the praise.

XXXVIII. This Sonnet may be regarded as bringing to a close xxxiii–xxxviii: see especially the two last lines. The poet's friend is a source of inspiration far surpassing the Nine Muses of antiquity. It is thence that whatever in these poems is worth perusal is derived. If they gain popularity, the praise is to be given to the inspiring cause. Cf. lines 10–14 with the words of the Dedication, "To the only begetter of these ensuing Sonnets—all happiness and that eternity promised by our ever-living poet."

3 *Argument.*—Subject-matter.

6 *Stand against thy sight.*—Endure thy sight.

8 *Dost give invention light.*—Dost cause the power of imagining and composing to exist.

12 *Eternal numbers,* &c.—Poems worthy of so exalted inspiration.

13 *Curious.*—Critical or fastidious.

14 *Pain.*—The Rev. W. A. Harrison has suggested whether this word is not to be connected with the "bringing forth" of line 11. Perhaps so. The idea of parturition may have been still before the poet's mind.

XXXIX.

O how thy worth with manners may I sing,
When thou art all the better part of me?
What can mine own praise to mine own self bring?
And what is't but mine own, when I praise thee?
Even for this let us divided live,
And our dear love lose name of single one,
That by this separation I may give
That due to thee, which thou deserv'st alone.
O absence, what a torment would'st thou prove,
Were it not thy sour leisure gave sweet leave
To entertain the time with thoughts of love,
Which time and thought so sweetly doth deceive,
And that thou teachest how to make one twain,
By praising him here, who doth hence remain.

XXXIX. This Sonnet may possibly stand alone. The poet is probably again absent from London (l. 9) on a professional tour. He is so closely united and incorporated with his friend that it is scarcely decorous for him to celebrate the friend's praise. In so doing he is but praising himself. A separation is desirable that this difficulty may be removed. But the time of absence makes his friend "twain;" though absent bodily, he is present with the poet in imagination.

10 *Sour leisure.*—Sour or distasteful on account of its cause, absence from his friend.

12 *Doth.*—Q. "dost." Malone changed "dost" into "doth."

XL.

Take all my loves, my love, yea, take them all;
What hast thou then more than thou hadst before?
No love, my love, that thou may'st true love call;
All mine was thine, before thou hadst this more. 4
Then if for my love thou my love receivest,
I cannot blame thee, for my love thou usest;
But yet be blam'd, if thou thyself deceivest
By wilful taste of what thyself refusest. 8
I do forgive thy robbery, gentle thief,
Although thou steal thee all my poverty;
And yet love knows, it is a greater grief
To bear love's wrong, than hate's known injury. 12
Lascivious grace, in whom all ill well shows,
Kill me with spites; yet we must not be foes. 14

XL. The poet hears, it may be assumed, during his absence (cf. xli. 2), that the *liaison* between Mr. W. H. and the dark lady is resumed or continued. But the poet and his friend being so entirely united that they were one (xxxix.), and that what belonged to the one belonged to the other, no fraud or robbery could have been committed. Still in outward form there seemed a robbery, which, though it causes pain to the poet, he forgives. The offence is even becoming and suitable to his young friend; and the friendship must not be changed into enmity.

4 *This more.*—This addition. Cf. note on xi. 11.

5 "If thou for my love (personal affection) receivest my love (loved mistress)"—a line quite suitable to the idea that Shakespeare was away in the country at the time.

6 Still playing on the double sense of "love."

7 *Thyself.*—Q. "this selfe." *Deceivest.*—Mr. W. H., it is suggested, may be committing a fraud on himself.

8 *By wilful taste of what thyself refusest.*—This has been explained of Mr. W. H.'s not having accepted the advice of i–xvii. But cf. Introd., p. 47.

10 *All my poverty.*—Instead of "all my wealth," and implying the scantiness of the poet's possessions.

XLI.

Those pretty wrongs that liberty commits,
When I am sometime absent from thy heart,
Thy beauty and thy years full well befits,
For still temptation follows where thou art.
Gentle thou art, and therefore to be won,
Beauteous thou art, therefore to be assailed ;
And when a woman woos, what woman's son
Will sourly leave her till she have prevailed ?
Ah me ! but yet thou mightst my seat forbear,
And chide thy beauty and thy straying youth,
Who lead thee in their riot even there
Where thou art forced to break a twofold truth ;
Hers, by thy beauty tempting her to thee,
Thine, by thy beauty being false to me.

XLI. The poet admits that, considering the youth and personal attractions of Mr. W. H., the affair was not after all so very unreasonable and unsuitable, especially when the lady was the suitor, though, during Shakespeare's absence from his "seat," it might have been regarded as sacred, and such restraint might have been observed as would have prevented the double breach of faith—the faith of the friend and the faith of the mistress.

1, 2 In accordance with what has been previously said, it may be supposed that Mr. W. H. takes this "liberty" while Shakespeare is away.

3 *Befits.*—As to the grammatical form cf. Introd., p. 32, note.

5 *To be won.*—But in cxliii. 9 *Will* is represented as "flying."

8 *Sourly.*—Harshly, morosely. *She have.*—Q., however, "he haue."

9 *Ah.*—Q. "Aye." *My seat.*—Cf. *Othello*, Act ii. sc. 1, lines 304, 305 :—

> " For that I do suspect the lusty Moor
> Hath leap'd into my seat."

This passage from *Othello* was compared by Boaden. Malone had substituted "sweet" for "seat." "Dr. Ingleby," quoted by Dowden, "adds, as a parallel, *Lucrece*, 412, 413 :—

> ' Who [Tarquin], like a foul usurper, went about
> From this fair throne to heave the owner out.' "

10 *Chide.*—Restrain the influence of.

XLII.

THAT thou hast her, it is not all my grief,
And yet it may be said I lov'd her dearly ;
That she hath thee, is of my wailing chief,
A loss in love that touches me more nearly.
Loving offenders, thus I will excuse ye :
Thou dost love her, because thou know'st I love her ;
And for my sake even so doth she abuse me,
Suffering my friend for my sake to approve her.
If I lose thee, my loss is my love's gain,
And losing her, my friend hath found that loss ;
Both find each other, and I lose both twain,
And both for my sake lay on me this cross :
But here's the joy ; my friend and I are one ;
Sweet flattery ! then she loves but me alone.

XLII. The chief cause of grief to the poet in the affair is, not that he has lost his mistress, but that, through her, he has lost his friend. Nevertheless he consoles himself: it is because he loves his mistress that his friend, knowing this, loves her, and because he loves his friend that his mistress loves him. Both do what they do for his sake. And as his friend is altogether identified with him, his mistress still loves him alone. At least the poet may flatter himself that this is so.

7 *Abuse me.*—Treat me badly.

9 *My love's gain.*—The "love" here spoken of is his mistress.

XLIII.

When most I wink, then do mine eyes best see,
For all the day they view things unrespected:
But when I sleep, in dreams they look on thee,
And darkly bright, are bright in dark directed;
Then thou whose shadow shadows doth make bright,
How would thy shadow's form form happy show
To the clear day with thy much clearer light,
When to unseeing eyes thy shade shines so?
How would (I say) mine eyes be blessed made
By looking on thee in the living day,
When in dead night thy fair imperfect shade
Through heavy sleep on sightless eyes doth stay?
All days are nights to see, till I see thee,
And nights, bright days, when dreams do show thee me.

XLIII. This Sonnet possibly begins a new group, but if the last four Sonnets were written while the poet was away from his friend, the absence continues. The poet's love for his friend transforms night into day and day into night. Darkness becomes bright when his friend's figure is seen in dreams, a figure which would add lustre to the clear daylight. How much, therefore, does he long to see his friend again. The days of absence are dark as night.

1 *Wink.*—Close the eyes in sleep. Cf. *Tempest*, Act ii. sc. 1, lines 284, 285:—

> "You, doing thus,
> To the perpetual wink for aye might put
> This ancient morsel!"

2 *Unrespected.*—Without paying attention to them.

4 *Darkly bright.*—Bright, though not seeing, the lids being closed. *Bright in dark directed.*—Become bright through the vision of the loved image, when the eyes, though closed, are directed in the darkness. No other sense seems practicable. Cf. xxvii., where the sleepless eyes, open by night, are spoken of.

5 *Whose shadow shadows doth make bright:*—

> "Which, like a jewel hung in ghastly night,
> Makes black night beauteous, and her old face new" (xxvii. 11, 12).

"Shadows" may represent either the darkness in general, or other dream-images (see line 3).

11 *Thy.*—Q. "their." *Imperfect*,—as being a mere insubstantial image.

XLIV.

If the dull substance of my flesh were thought,
Injurious distance should not stop my way;
For then, despite of space, I would be brought
From limits far remote, where thou dost stay.
No matter then, although my foot did stand
Upon the farthest earth remov'd from thee,
For nimble thought can jump both sea and land,
As soon as think the place where he would be.
But ah! thought kills me, that I am not thought,
To leap large lengths of miles when thou art gone,
But that, so much of earth and water wrought,
I must attend time's leisure with my moan;
Receiving nought by elements so slow
But heavy tears, badges of either's woe:

XLIV. The poet wishes that his bodily substance, compounded as it is so much of earth and water, could be transformed into thought, so that he might leap over the long miles which separate him from his friend.

2 *Injurious.*—Hostile, as presenting an impediment to intercourse.

4 *Limits far remote.*—Implying a very considerable distance. *Where thou dost stay.*—To the place where thou dost stay. What is here said, as well as "when thou art gone," cf. line 10, seems to imply that Mr. W. H. had now taken a journey. Possibly both Shakespeare and Mr. W. H. may have been away from London at the same time.

9 The thought that I am not thought kills me.

12 *Time's leisure.*—The opportunity for meeting which will come in the course of time.

13, 14 The "slow elements" of which the poet's body is composed enable him only to weep. His friend is regarded as in the like position. *Nought.*—Q. "naughts."

XLV.

The other two, slight air and purging fire,
Are both with thee, wherever I abide ;
The first my thought, the other my desire,
These present-absent with swift motion slide.
For when these quicker elements are gone
In tender embassy of love to thee,
My life being made of four, with two alone,
Sinks down to death, oppress'd with melancholy ;
Until life's composition be recured
By those swift messengers return'd from thee,
Who even but now come back again, assured
Of thy fair health, recounting it to me :
This told, I joy ; but then no longer glad,
I send them back again, and straight grow sad.

XLV. The poet had spoken of earth and water as entering into his compositions. He had omitted the other elements, air and fire. These constituents of him, the one as thought, the other as desire, are constantly passing to and fro over the separating distance, causing sadness and joy by their departure and return.

1 *Purging fire.*—The purifying influence of the "refiner's fire" is well known. Here, however, the idea would seem to be that of swiftness and impetuosity.

9 *Recured.*—Restored.

12 *Thy.*—Q. "their."

***

XLVI.

Mine eye and heart are at a mortal war,
How to divide the conquest of thy sight;
Mine eye my heart thy picture's sight would bar,
My heart mine eye the freedom of that right.
My heart doth plead, that thou in him dost lie,
(A closet never pierc'd with crystal eyes,)
But the defendant doth that plea deny,
And says in him thy fair appearance lies.
To 'cide this title is impannelled
A quest of thoughts, all tenants to the heart;
And by their verdict is determined
The clear eye's moiety, and the dear heart's part:
As thus; mine eye's due is thine outward part,
And my heart's right thine inward love of heart.

XLVI. But the poet has another source of pleasure in relation to his friend, besides his image seen in dreams and the belief that he is well (see xliii., xlv.). He possesses his friend's picture. But does this picture give a truer image than that portrayed in the heart (cf. xxiv.)? The eye (defendant) and heart (plaintiff) contest the question. The decision is given by a jury of thoughts, to the effect that the eye sees in the picture the outward form: to the heart alone it belongs to discern inward and true affection.

2 Which shall be the victor as having a true vision of thee.

3 *Thy picture's sight would bar.*—As not concerning the heart. *Thy.* —Q. "their."

4, 5 The heart denies that the eye has a special privilege in the possession of the friend's image. The image is rather to be found in the heart itself. The heart seems to complain of the external picture being used. Cf. what the poet says about the "table book" which he had given away in cxxii.

7 Notice the remarkable use of legal expressions in this and following lines, "defendant," "plea," "title," "quest," "tenants," "impannelled," "verdict," "moiety," "determined." It would scarcely, however, be suitable to infer from evidence of this kind that Shakespeare had been a lawyer's clerk, or had been otherwise professionally occupied in the law.

8 *Thy.*—Q. "their."

9 *'Cide.*—Q. "side."

10 The jury of "tenants to the heart" seems to consist, like that of a "crowner's quest," of those living in the neighbourhood.

12 *The dear heart.*—The loving heart.

13, 14 *Thine . . . thine.*—Q. "their . . . their."

XLVII.

Betwixt mine eye and heart a league is took,
And each doth good turns now unto the other:
When that mine eye is famished for a look,
Or heart in love with sighs himself doth smother,
With my love's picture then my eye doth feast,
And to the painted banquet bids my heart:
Another time mine eye is my heart's guest,
And in his thoughts of love doth share a part:
So, either by thy picture or my love,
Thyself away art present still with me;
For thou not farther than my thoughts canst move,
And I am still with them, and they with thee;
Or if they sleep, thy picture in my sight
Awakes my heart to heart's and eye's delight.

XLVII. The dispute described in xlvi. is decided, and the poet's heart and eye have come to terms of agreement. The eye allows the heart to share in the delight occasioned by gazing on the friend's picture, or the heart entertains the eye. By means of one or both, the friend, though away, is present with the poet. But if at any time the poet's thoughts are otherwise directed, the picture recalls them.

4 The sighs come forth from the heart in such profusion that they are said to "smother" the heart.

7 *Mine eye is my heart's guest.*—Meaning, perhaps, that loving thoughts bring the image of the friend before the eye.

My love.—The poet's love causes the friend's image to appear in the heart.

11 *Not.*—Q. "nor."

XLVIII.

How careful was I when I took my way
Each trifle under truest bars to thrust,
That, to my use, it might unused stay
From hands of falsehood, in sure wards of trust!
But thou, to whom my jewels trifles are,
Most worthy comfort, now my greatest grief,
Thou, best of dearest, and mine only care,
Art left the prey of every vulgar thief.
Thee have I not lock'd up in any chest,
Save where thou art not, though I feel thou art,
Within the gentle closure of my breast,
From whence at pleasure thou may'st come and part;
And even thence thou wilt be stolen I fear,
For truth proves thievish for a prize so dear.

XLVIII. Here again a new group of Sonnets probably begins. The poet appears to have grounds for suspicion that an attempt is being made by one or more rivals to oust him from the love and esteem of Mr. W. H. Before commencing his journey all his valuables had been safely locked up. But his most precious and tempting possession, the love of his friend, could not be so guarded. It was not secure even within his breast.

2 *Truest bars.*—Most trustworthy locks, bolts, or other defences of the "sure wards of trust" of line 4.

4 *Hands of falsehood.*—Hands of the fraudulent.

5 *Jewels* may mean valuable possessions of any kind, without implying that Shakespeare was rich in precious stones. Cf. "each trifle" of line 2.

6 *Greatest grief.*—On account of the suspicion entertained.

7 *Best of dearest.*—Cf. "most most loving," cx. 14.

XLIX.

Against that time, if ever that time come,
When I shall see thee frown on my defects,
Whenas thy love hath cast his utmost sum,
Call'd to that audit by advis'd respects;
Against that time, when thou shalt strangely pass,
And scarcely greet me with that sun, thine eye,
When love, converted from the thing it was,
Shall reasons find of settled gravity;
Against that time do I insconce me here
Within the knowledge of mine own desert,
And this my hand against myself uprear,
To guard the lawful reasons on thy part:
To leave poor me thou hast the strength of laws,
Since, why to love, I can allege no cause.

XLIX. The previous Sonnet had contemplated the possibility of a rival superseding the poet in his friend's affections. The desertion which would then ensue would imply, however, no unjustifiable fickleness. When the poet's merits and faults are summed up, the faults may well seem to preponderate. He can, indeed, find in himself no reason why he should be loved.

3 *Whenas.*—When the time comes that. *Hath cast his utmost sum.*—Has made up and balanced the account.

4 *Advis'd respects.*—"Reasons of settled gravity" (line 8), "lawful reasons" (12).

10 *Desert.*—Q. "desart" rhyming with "part."

12 *To guard*, &c.—As a witness of the justice and propriety of such a course.

13 *The strength of laws.*—Perfect legal right in taking this course.

L.

How heavy do I journey on the way,
When what I seek, my weary travel's end,
Doth teach that ease and that repose to say,
'Thus far the miles are measur'd from thy friend !'
The beast that bears me, tired with my woe,
Plods dully on, to bear that weight in me,
As if by some instinct the wretch did know
His rider lov'd not speed, being made from thee :
The bloody spur cannot provoke him on
That sometimes anger thrusts into his hide,
Which heavily he answers with a groan,
More sharp to me than spurring to his side ;
For that same groan doth put this in my mind,
My grief lies onward, and my joy behind.

L. The poet finds the journey which he is taking tedious and wearisome. The ease and repose looked for at the end of each day's travel are lost in the thought that every stage marks so many miles farther away from his friend. The very beast on which he rides sympathises with his rider, as if by instinct, and plods heavily on, answering, when spurred, with a groan, a groan which reminds his rider of his own sorrow.

[3] *That ease and that repose to say*, &c.—A bold metaphor, to make the halting-station, or the rest obtained there, speak.

[6] *Dully*.—Q. "duly."

LI.

THUS can my love excuse the slow offence
Of my dull bearer, when from thee I speed :
From where thou art why should I haste me thence ?
Till I return, of posting is no need.
O, what excuse will my poor beast then find,
When swift extremity can seem but slow ?
Then should I spur, though mounted on the wind ;
In winged speed no motion shall I know :
Then can no horse with my desire keep pace ;
Therefore Desire (of perfect love being made)
Shall neigh, no dull flesh, in his fiery race ;
But love, for love, thus shall excuse my jade ;
Since from thee going he went wilful slow,
Towards thee I'll run, and give him leave to go.

LI. If, to the poet, journeying away from his friend was distasteful and slow, the return will not be swift enough, even though he were mounted on the wind. He will then dispense with his horse, and run or fly back, riding on no dull flesh, but borne on the wings of Desire.

1 *Thus can my love excuse*, &c.—In accordance with lines 3, 4.

6 *Swift extremity.*—The extreme of swiftness.

8 *In winged speed no motion shall I know.*—A swift gliding motion is imagined. In the opinion of Mr. G. Bernard Shaw, the word "motion" is used in the sense of "progression," implying that, even with "winged speed," the poet, in his extreme eagerness, will seem to make no advance towards his friend.

10, 11 The poet apparently conceives of himself as mounted on Desire, a winged fiery steed, which neighs with ardour, pursuing his impetuous course.

12 *Love, for love.*—A difficult expression, of which, perhaps, neither of the following interpretations may seem quite satisfactory :—(1) The words "for love" may be taken as meaning "from love to the poor beast," the speed required by the poet's love for his friend being far beyond the powers of such a creature. (2) "For love" may mean "for the sake of the love awaiting me on my return." (3) Dr. Furnivall has made the suggestion that the "love" first spoken of is Love personified. We shall thus have "Love, on account of my affection," &c. (4) According to Mr. Shaw, "for love" means "on account of the love shown by the horse." This love will have been shown in the "plodding dully on" of l. 6. "Wilful" of line 13 must then signify "purposely on account of affection." I incline to (4). This view agrees also with the "since" of line 13.

14 *Give him leave to go.*—Dismiss him, or, let him go at his pleasure.

LII.

So am I as the rich, whose blessed key
Can bring him to his sweet up-locked treasure,
The which he will not every hour survey,
For blunting the fine point of seldom pleasure.
Therefore are feasts so solemn and so rare,
Since seldom coming, in the long year set,
Like stones of worth they thinly placed are,
Or captain jewels in the carconet.
So is the time that keeps you, as my chest,
Or as the wardrobe which the robe doth hide,
To make some special instant special blest,
By new unfolding his imprison'd pride.
Blessed are you, whose worthiness gives scope,
Being had, to triumph, being lack'd, to hope.

LII. The return, it may be supposed, has now taken place. The delight which the poet takes in his friend's society is so great that there is danger lest its keenness should be dulled and diminished if it were too frequently indulged in. Festal days, on account of their rarity, are more highly esteemed. A precious jewel in the casket, or a rich garment in the wardrobe, gives greater joy when not too often seen. So should it be with his friend's society—to be prized triumphantly when present, and hoped for when absent.

4 *For blunting.*—Lest he should blunt.

8 *Captain jewels in the carconet.*—The principal jewels in the string constituting the necklace or carconet (so spelled here in Q.).

9 *The time* during which Mr. W. H. is away is like the casket which keeps a jewel from view.

12 *His imprison'd pride.*—The splendid garment, the pride of the wardrobe.

LIII.

What is your substance, whereof are you made,
That millions of strange shadows on you tend?
Since every one hath, every one, one shade,
And you, but one, can every shadow lend.
Describe Adonis, and the counterfeit
Is poorly imitated after you;
On Helen's cheek all art of beauty set,
And you in Grecian tires are painted new:
Speak of the spring, and foizon of the year;
The one doth shadow of your beauty show,
The other as your bounty doth appear,
And you in every blessed shape we know.
In all external grace you have some part,
But you like none, none you, for constant heart.

LIII. Ordinary objects have each but one shadow or one image. But the beauties and excellences of Mr. W. H. are so numerous that he is reflected millions of times. His image is to be discerned in every shape of beauty and grace; but no other object reflects his fidelity.

2 *Strange shadows.*—Images of other persons and objects. Shadows and images are taken as identical. Cf. cxiii., cxiv.

3 Each individually has *one* shadow. The expression in the text is emphatic, to contrast with the multitudinous shadows caused by, or connected with, the single Mr. W. H. (line 4).

5 *The counterfeit.*—The description, as *possibly* also in *Hamlet* (Act iii. sc. 4, line 54), "the counterfeit presentment of two brothers."

7 Depict Helen with all the skill of pictorial art.

8 *Grecian tires.*—Grecian *head*-dress properly, though here the word "tires" would seem to be used more generally. Notice, however, from the comparison with Helen, the feminine character of Mr. W. H.'s youthful beauty. Cf. xx.

LIV.

O how much more doth beauty beauteous seem,
By that sweet ornament which truth doth give!
The rose looks fair, but fairer we it deem
For that sweet odour which doth in it live.
The canker-blooms have full as deep a dye,
As the perfumed tincture of the roses,
Hang on such thorns, and play as wantonly
When summer's breath their masked buds discloses:
But, for their virtue only is their show,
They live unwoo'd, and unrespected fade;
Die to themselves. Sweet roses do not so;
Of their sweet deaths are sweetest odours made:
And so of you, beauteous and lovely youth,
When that shall vade, by verse distils your truth.

LIV. This Sonnet continues and expands the sentiment of liii. 14. Beauty is made more beautiful by inward worth. The beauty of the rose is thus enhanced by its sweet odour from within. In this it excels the "canker-blooms," which no one prizes either when they are alive or after they have faded. But roses, fading and dying, yield sweet perfumes. And so, when the beauty of Mr. W. H. passes away, his truth and fidelity will be preserved, "distilled" in the poet's verse.

5 *The canker-blooms have full as deep a dye.*—If, as seems to be the case, the "canker-bloom" is the dog-rose, then, as Steevens remarks, there is an inconsistency in the statement of the text, since the dog-rose is of a pale colour, and, moreover, is not entirely without odour.

6 *Perfumed tincture of the roses.*—The roses, with their perfume and colour. "Tincture" is equivalent to the "dye" of the previous line.

11 *Die to themselves.*—The "canker-blooms" die neglected and unregarded.

14 *Vade.*—So Q. Dowden, adopting this form, refers to *Passionate Pilgrim*, x. 1, "Sweet rose, fair flower, untimely pluck'd, soon vaded."

LV.

Nor marble, nor the gilded monument
Of princes, shall outlive this powerful rhyme ;
But you shall shine more bright in these contents
Than unswept stone, besmear'd with sluttish time.
When wasteful war shall statues overturn,
And broils root out the work of masonry,
Nor Mars his sword nor war's quick fire shall burn
The living record of your memory.
'Gainst death and all oblivious enmity
Shall you pace forth ; your praise shall still find room,
Even in the eyes of all posterity
That wear this world out to the ending doom.
So till the judgment that yourself arise,
You live in this, and dwell in lovers' eyes.

LV. This Sonnet, again, links itself to the last line of that preceding. Secured by the poet's verse, his friend's fame shall outlast the monuments of princes, and shine more brightly than the inscriptions engraven thereon. Defying the powers of oblivion, it shall endure so long as the world lasts. Cf. Introd., chap. iii. §. 2.

1 *Monument.*—So Q., though the poet may possibly have written "monuments." Malone pointed out the relation of this Sonnet to Horace's "Exegi monumentum aere perennius," &c.

3 *These contents.*—The descriptions and eulogies contained in these Sonnets.

5 *Wasteful.*—Devastating.

7 *Nor Mars his sword nor war's quick fire shall burn.*—With evident allusion to Meres's *Palladis Tamia*, Part II., fol. 282, ed. 1598, "Mars, ferrum, flamma."

9 *All oblivious enmity.*—Cf. Meres, *loc. cit.*, "Et quanquam ad pulcherrimum hoc opus euertendum, tres illi Dii conspirabunt, Cronus, Vulcanus, et pater ipse gentis."

10 *Pace forth.*—Come forth in public view.

14 *Dwell in lovers' eyes.*—Will be constantly before the eyes of lovers, who will read these poems.

LVI.

Sweet love, renew thy force; be it not said,
Thy edge should blunter be than appetite,
Which but to-day by feeding is allay'd,
To-morrow sharpen'd in his former might:
So, love, be thou; although to-day thou fill
Thy hungry eyes, even till they wink with fulness,
To-morrow see again, and do not kill
The spirit of love with a perpetual dulness.
Let this sad int'rim like the ocean be
Which parts the shore, where two contracted-new
Come daily to the banks, that, when they see
Return of love, more blest may be the view;
Or call it winter, which, being full of care,
Makes summer's welcome thrice more wish'd, more rare.

LVI. This Sonnet may begin another group comprising lvi.–lviii. The poet thinks that there is an abatement of affection on the part of his friend, and that, on both sides, there is some danger of satiety and "perpetual dulness." He does not, however, despair of a renewal of love with its former strength, though, for the present, there is a "sad interim," an anxious winter. Cf. Introd., chap. iii. p. 21.

2, 3, 4 The appetite for food is, by eating, appeased only for to-day. To-morrow it will be as vigorous as ever.

6 *Wink with fulness.*—Close through satiety.

9–12 It is difficult to determine precisely the conception partially expressed in these lines. I would suggest whether the poet did not imagine an irruption of the sea on land, so as to "part" what was previously continuous. But, through persistence of the wind or other cause, the sea holds for a time its conquest, and the two "contracted" or betrothed lovers come daily to the "banks," expecting that the sea has retired. But in line 12, instead of speaking of the return of the sea, the poet dismisses his simile, and speaks of the "return of love." The words "two contracted-*new*" are important as according with the position that, when this Sonnet was written, Shakespeare's friendship with Mr. W. H. was still new and the commencement of it was recent.

13 *Or.*—Q. "As." The emendation was suggested to Malone by Tyrwhitt.

14 Makes the coming of summer far more earnestly desired, prepares for it a heartier welcome, and causes it to be more highly prized.

LVII.

Being your slave, what should I do but tend
Upon the hours and times of your desire?
I have no precious time at all to spend,
Nor services to do, till you require.
Nor dare I chide the world-without-end hour,
Whilst I, my sovereign, watch the clock for you,
Nor think the bitterness of absence sour,
When you have bid your servant once adieu;
Nor dare I question with my jealous thought
Where you may be, or your affairs suppose,
But, like a sad slave, stay and think of nought,
Save, where you are how happy you make those:
So true a fool is love, that in your Will
(Though you do anything) he thinks no ill.

LVII. Dowden justly observes, "The absence spoken of in this Sonnet seems to be voluntary absence on the part of Shakspere's friend." The poet rebuts a real or imaginary imputation, that Mr. W. H. had not received sufficiently obsequious attention. The poet's time and services were entirely at his friend's disposal. It was not for the poet to dictate whether his friend should be present or absent, or to complain of being long kept awaiting his coming.

5 *The world-without-end hour.*—"The tedious hour, that seems as if it would never end. So in *Love's Labour's Lost* (Act v. sc. ii., lines 798, 799):—

'A time, methinks, too short
To make a world-without-end bargain in;'

i.e., an everlasting bargain."—Malone.

7 *Sour.*—As elsewhere, distasteful, hard, harsh.

9 Nor dare I entertain the question, &c.

13 *Will.*—I have retained the W. of Q., as there is a bare possibility of a pun.

LVIII.

That God forbid, that made me first your slave,
I should in thought control your times of pleasure,
Or at your hand th' account of hours to crave,
Being your vassal, bound to stay your leisure!
O, let me suffer (being at your beck)
Th' imprison'd absence of your liberty,
And patience, tame to sufferance, bide each check
Without accusing you of injury.
Be where you list; your charter is so strong,
That you yourself may privilege your time
To what you will, to you it doth belong
Yourself to pardon of self-doing crime.
I am to wait, though waiting so be hell;
Not blame your pleasure, be it ill or well.

LVIII. This Sonnet follows closely on lvii. The poet still speaks as a very humble servant of Mr. W. H., with no right to complain, whatever suffering may be inflicted. We may recognise, however, somewhat of irony, as in the previous Sonnet, where he speaks of Mr. W. H. as "my sovereign." Here we may note also the expressions "your slave" (as in lvii., line 11), "your vassal," "yourself to pardon of self-doing crime."

6 *Imprison'd absence of your liberty.*—Dowden explains, "The separation from you which is proper to your state of freedom, but which to me is imprisonment. Or the want which I, a prisoner, suffer of such liberty as you possess." In other words, Mr. W. H.'s "liberty to absent" himself from Shakespeare "imprisoned" the poet, whose eager anxiety for the companionship of his friend met with an impassable "check."

7 *Tame to sufferance.*—Subdue patience into suffering.

10, 11 *Privilege your time to what you will.*—It is, in accordance with "your charter," your privilege, to devote your time to what you please.

13 *Though waiting so be hell.*—Cf. cxx. 6, "Y' have passed a hell of time," where the context ("as I by yours") probably looks back to the events with which this Sonnet is concerned.

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LIX.

If there be nothing new, but that which is
Hath been before, how are our brains beguil'd,
Which, labouring for invention, bear amiss
The second burthen of a former child !
O, that record could with a backward look,
Even of five hundred courses of the sun,
Show me your image in some antique book,
Since mind at first in character was done !
That I might see what the old world could say
To this composed wonder of your frame ;
Whether we are mended, or whe'r better they,
Or whether revolution be the same.
O ! sure I am, the wits of former days
To subjects worse have given admiring praise.

LIX. Here there is pretty clearly a break of continuity. The poet brings forward, as an hypothesis, the ancient doctrine of the cycles—that there is nothing really new, but that all things revolve again and again in the same order. If this hypothesis be true, the poet would like to see an ancient book with the description of his friend as he had previously existed. But former writers had occupied themselves with subjects less worthy. Introd., chap. xi. p. 101.

1 *There.*—Q. "their."

2–4 An author may imagine that he is composing a new book, but, according to the hypothesis in question, he is only repeating his former performance.

5 *Record.*—History.

8 *Since mind*, &c.—Since thought was first expressed in language.

10 *To this composed wonder of your frame.*—To your bodily structure, with its extraordinary beauty.

11 *Whe'r.*—Q. has "where." "Whe'r" must be taken, of course, as a contraction of "whether."

LX.

Like as the waves make towards the pebbled shore,
So do our minutes hasten to their end;
Each changing place with that which goes before,
In sequent toil all forwards do contend.
Nativity, once in the main of light,
Crawls to maturity, wherewith being crown'd,
Crooked eclipses 'gainst his glory fight,
And Time, that gave, doth now his gift confound.
Time doth transfix the flourish set on youth,
And delves the parallels in beauty's brow;
Feeds on the rarities of nature's truth,
And nothing stands but for his scythe to mow.
And yet, to times in hope, my verse shall stand,
Praising thy worth, despite his cruel hand.

LX. This Sonnet is in connection with that next before. It is also under the influence of the melancholy cast of thought not perhaps unnaturally produced by the theory of an unvarying and inexorable succession, a revolution ever the same. The particulars which make up human life succeed one another in unvarying order and with unresting onward movement, from birth to maturity, and from maturity to decay and dissolution. But the poet anticipates greater durability for his verse, and consequently for the fame of his friend. Lix. and lx. probably constitute a separate group.

5 *The main of light.*—The expanse of light; the world conceived as though a wide ocean enlightened by the rays of the sun.

6 *Crawls to maturity.*—Meaning, probably, not merely that the progress is slow, but that the condition of mankind is abject. Cf. *Hamlet*, Act iii. sc. 1, lines 129-131, "What should such fellows as I do *crawling* between earth and heaven?"

7 *Crooked eclipses.*—Adverse circumstances and conditions, which are "crooked," as being hostile to onward progress, changing its course, or arresting it.

8 *Doth now his gift confound.*—Spoil and render worthless his gift. Cf. v. 6.

9 *Doth transfix the flourish set on youth.*—Doth kill and destroy youthful beauty.

11 *Feeds on*, &c.—Feeds on whatever is pre-eminently excellent. *Nature's truth.*—That which is naturally and genuinely beautiful and excellent, as opposed to what is meretricious and artificial.

LXI.

Is it thy will, thy image should keep open
My heavy eyelids to the weary night?
Dost thou desire my slumbers should be broken,
While shadows, like to thee, do mock my sight?
Is it thy spirit that thou send'st from thee
So far from home, into my deeds to pry;
To find out shames and idle hours in me,
The scope and tenor of thy jealousy?
O no! thy love, though much, is not so great:
It is my love that keeps mine eye awake;
Mine own true love that doth my rest defeat,
To play the watchman ever for thy sake:
For thee watch I, whilst thou dost wake elsewhere
From me far off, with others all too near.

LXI. Repeats the sentiment of xxvii. The poet cannot sleep for the thought of his friend. Is it possible that the images appearing nightly before his eyes proceed from the spirit of his friend which comes to him, moved by love, from the distant place where is his friend's bodily presence? No: it is the poet's faithful love which prevents his rest; for there are rivals engaging his friend's attention. It is not certain whether Shakespeare or Mr. W. H. is absent from London.

7–9 To see whether Shakespeare is associating with persons who rival Mr. W. H. in his estimation, and whether, in idle hours, he is guilty of disgraceful conduct. But no; the love of Mr. W. H. is not so great as to make *him* jealous.

11 *Doth my rest defeat.*—Cf. xx. 11, "Me of thee defeated."

LXII.

Sin of self-love possesseth all mine eye,
And all my soul, and all my every part;
And for this sin there is no remedy,
It is so grounded inward in my heart.
Methinks no face so gracious is as mine,
No shape so true, no truth of such account,
And for myself mine own worth do define,
As I all other in all worths surmount.
But when my glass shows me myself indeed,
Beated and chopp'd with tann'd antiquity,
Mine own self-love quite contrary I read,
Self so self-loving were iniquity.
'Tis thee (myself) that for myself I praise,
Painting my age with beauty of thy days.

LXII. But here again, as in xxxv., xxxvi., the poet proceeds from imputations cast on his friend to introspection and self-accusation. He is saturated and thoroughly possessed by self-esteem. But the sight of a mirror disabuses him of an overweening estimate of his own beauty. Still, incorporated as he is with his youthful friend, he may still paint his own maturer age with the beauty of youth. That indeed is what he has been doing (cf. xxii.).

[5] *So gracious.*—Displaying such grace or beauty.

[6] No symmetry of form equally perfect and admirable with mine.

[10] *Beated and chopp'd with tann'd antiquity.*—Meaning, probably, battered, wrinkled, and darkened, or discoloured, bronzed.

[11] The poet then comes to a totally different opinion concerning his self-love. It was in reality love of thee (13).

[12] It would be "iniquity" for the poet to admire and esteem his beauty after the revelation made by the mirror.

LXIII.

Against my love shall be, as I am now,
With Time's injurious hand crush'd and o'erworn;
When hours have drain'd his blood, and fill'd his brow
With lines and wrinkles; when his youthful morn
Hath travell'd on to age's steepy night;
And all those beauties, whereof now he's king,
Are vanishing or vanish'd out of sight,
Stealing away the treasure of his spring;
For such a time do I now fortify
Against confounding age's cruel knife,
That he shall never cut from memory
My sweet love's beauty, though my lover's life.
His beauty shall in these black lines be seen,
And they shall live, and he in them still green.

LXIII. Connected with lxii. The poet's beauty is suffering from the ravages of Time. His friend must also decay; but these Sonnets will be a secure defence for him against the power of age, death, and oblivion.

3 *Fill'd.*—Q. "fild."

5 *Hath travell'd on to age's steepy night.*—Malone compares vii. :—

> "Having climb'd the steep-up heavenly hill,
> Resembling strong youth in his middle age."

Here "age's steepy night" is the decline of old age downward to the sunset of life and the night of death.

6 *Whereof now he's king.*—In which he supremely excels.

10 *Confounding.*—Cf. v. 6; lx. 8. *Age's cruel knife* may be taken as pretty nearly equivalent to Time's scythe.

LXIV.

When I have seen by Time's fell hand defac'd
The rich-proud cost of outworn buried age ;
When sometime lofty towers I see down-rased,
And brass eternal, slave to mortal rage ;
When I have seen the hungry ocean gain
Advantage on the kingdom of the shore,
And the firm soil win of the wat'ry main,
Increasing store with loss, and loss with store ;
When I have seen such interchange of state,
Or state itself confounded to decay ;
Ruin hath taught me thus to ruminate—
That Time will come and take my love away.
This thought is as a death, which cannot choose
But weep to have that which it fears to lose.

LXIV. The melancholy train of thought which commenced with lix. still continues. All things are mutable, and in a constant state of flux and reflux. From the dominion of Time, Change, and Decay none can hope to escape; a thought which touches the poet with sadness, when he thinks of his friend.

2 The sumptuous buildings or other appurtenances of a generation or a people which has decayed and passed away, and which is now buried in the dust.

4 *Mortal rage.*—Deadly, destroying. "Mortal rage" refers to the supreme principle of Mutability and Decay.

5–8 The words of K. Hen. IV., Part II., Act iii. sc. 1, lines 45–51, have been justly compared :—

> "O God, that one might read the book of fate,
> And see the revolution of the times
> Make mountains level, and the continent,
> Weary of solid firmness, melt itself
> Into the sea ! and other times, to see
> The beachy girdle of the ocean
> Too wide for Neptune's hips," &c. (Cf. Introd., chap. xi.).

The following lines from Tennyson's *In Memoriam*, written, probably, to some extent, under Shakespearian influence, may also be given :—

> "There rolls the deep where grew the tree,
> O earth, what changes hast thou seen !
> There where the long street roars hath been
> The stillness of the central sea.

"The hills are shadows, and they flow
From form to form, and nothing stands;
They melt like mist, the solid lands,
Like clouds they shape themselves and go."

[8] Extending its own domain by what the other loses, and losing by what the other gains.

[10] *State.*—Magnificence, though in the previous line "state" seems to mean "condition."

[13] *This thought is as a death.*—Causing anticipatively the pang of separation.

LXV.

SINCE brass, nor stone, nor earth, nor boundless sea,
But sad mortality o'ersways their power,
How with this rage shall beauty hold a plea,
Whose action is no stronger than a flower?
O, how shall summer's honey breath hold out
Against the wrackful siege of battering days,
When rocks impregnable are not so stout,
Nor gates of steel so strong, but Time decays?
O fearful meditation! where, alack!
Shall Time's best jewel from Time's chest lie hid?
Or what strong hand can hold his swift foot back?
Or who his spoil of beauty can forbid?
O, none, unless this miracle have might,
That in black ink my love may still shine bright.

LXV. If brass and stone, earth and sea, are all subject to decay, human beauty, which is frail as a flower, can have no hope of permanence, unless, indeed, it can attain immortality when portrayed in words by the author's pen.

3 *Rage* here would seem to be determined and resistless power. *Shall beauty hold a plea.*—Shall beauty attempt to maintain its position?

5 *Summer's honey breath.*—The sweet breath of life's summer.

6 *Wrackful.*—In accordance with Q., "wrackfull," meaning "destructive." *Siege of battering days.*—"Siege of loving terms," *Romeo and Juliet*, Act i. sc. 1, line 218, was compared by Steevens. *Battering days.*—The determined assault of Time.

10 *Time's best jewel,—i.e.*, the poet's friend. *Time's chest* has been considered with probability as being, like Time's wallet, a receptacle of oblivion.

LXVI.

Tir'd with all these, for restful death I cry,—
As, to behold desert a beggar born,
And needy nothing trimm'd in jollity,
And purest faith unhappily forsworn,
And gilded honour shamefully misplaced,
And maiden virtue rudely strumpeted,
And right perfection wrongfully disgraced,
And strength by limping sway disabled,
And art made tongue-tied by authority,
And folly (doctor-like) controlling skill,
And simple truth miscall'd simplicity,
And captive Good attending Captain Ill:
Tir'd with all these, from these would I be gone,
Save that, to die, I leave my love alone.

LXVI. The tone of melancholy, which has been previously heard, especially since lix., now attains a greater intensity, and we have a pessimism which has been compared to that of *Hamlet*. The poet sees in the world and the arrangements of society so many things abnormal and awry, that, in his weariness and loathing, he cries out for death, though unwilling to leave his friend.

1 *Tir'd with all these,—i e.*, such things as those which follow.

2 *As.*—As, for example. *Desert a beggar born.*—Real merit and worth suffering the disqualification of an abjectly mean origin, and restrained by penury.

3 This line probably refers to what is commonly described as "keeping up an appearance."

4 *Unhappily forsworn.*—Through the pressure of circumstances (as seems likely) in an evil world.

5 *Gilded honour shamefully misplaced.*—Cf. Ecclesiastes x. 5, 6, "There is an evil which I have seen under the sun, as an error which proceedeth from the ruler. Folly is set in great dignity," &c.

6 *Rudely.*—Either of physical force, or of the recklessness of slander; but the latter sense would seem to agree with the next line.

8 *Strength by limping sway disabled.*—Describes the injury inflicted by an incompetent and feeble government.

9, 10 In these lines there seem to be allusions to universities and their technical phraseology. This view accords with the use of *doctor-like*, and line 9 (where *art* will denote "learning") may be taken to refer to opinions obnoxious to those in authority being forbidden to be expressed and published.

12 This is a climax. Evil is a victorious *captain*, with *Good* as a *captive* attending to grace his triumph.

LXVII.

Ah, wherefore with infection should he live,
And with his presence grace impiety,
That sin by him advantage should achieve,
And lace itself with his society? 4
Why should false painting imitate his cheek,
And steal dead seeing of his living hue?
Why should poor beauty indirectly seek
Roses of shadow, since his rose is true? 8
Why should he live now Nature bankrupt is,
Beggar'd of blood to blush through lively veins?
For she hath no exchequer now but his,
And, proud of many, lives upon his gains. 12
O, him she stores, to show what wealth she had,
In days long since, before these last so bad. 14

LXVII. The world being such as was represented in the last Sonnet, the excellences of the poet's friend are out of place. Its atmosphere is charged with an infecting miasma. The friend's beauty serves as an extenuation and excuse for the debasement and decay of all around. The only reason which can be assigned for his presence in such a world is, that he is Nature's memorial of a golden age long passed away.

3 *That sin by him advantage*, &c.—His presence serving as a veil to conceal corruption.

4 *Lace itself with his society.*—"Lace" may here mean "embellish," though in passages which have been quoted in proof the sense is rather "diversify." So in *Rom. and Jul.*, Act iii. sc. 5, lines 7, 8,—

> "What envious streaks
> Do lace the severing clouds in yonder east;"

and *Macbeth*, Act ii. sc. 3, lines 117–119,—

> "Here lay Duncan,
> His silver skin laced with his golden blood;
> And his gashed stabs looked like a breach in nature," &c.

6 *Dead seeing.*—"Seeing" is equivalent to "appearance." Cf. v. 2, "The lovely gaze where every eye doth dwell." The "seeing" is "dead" as not being the result of healthy vitality, but mere imitation.

7 *Poor beauty.*—Beauty indifferent and imperfect. *Indirectly.*—By artificial means.

8 *Shadow.*—Mere external appearance.

12 *Proud of many.*—On account of their seeming beauty, which, however, is not caused by "blood blushing through lively veins."

LXVIII.

Thus is his cheek the map of days outworn,
When beauty liv'd and died as flowers do now,
Before these bastard signs of fair were borne,
Or durst inhabit on a living brow;
Before the golden tresses of the dead,
The right of sepulchres, were shorn away,
To live a second life on second head;
Ere beauty's dead fleece made another gay.
In him those holy antique hours are seen,
Without all ornament, itself, and true,
Making no summer of another's green,
Robbing no old to dress his beauty new;
And him as for a map doth Nature store,
To show false Art what beauty was of yore.

LXVIII. Enlarges further on the subject of the last Sonnet, and in addition condemns the wearing of false hair.

1 *The map of days outworn.*—"This pattern of the worn-out age," used of the groom in *Lucrece*, has been compared, as also "Thou map of honour" in *King Richard II.*, Act v. sc. 1, line 12.

3 *These bastard signs of fair.*—This mere artificial appearance of beauty. *Bastard.*—As not truly derived from Nature.

6 *The right of sepulchres.*—Which should have been consigned to the sepulchre, and have remained there. The following passage from the *Merchant of Venice*, Act iii. sc. 2, lines 92-96, has been justly compared:—

> "So are those crisped snaky golden locks,
> Which make such wanton gambols with the wind,
> Upon supposed fairness, often known
> To be the dowry of a second head,
> The skull that bred them in the sepulchre."

8 *Ere beauty's dead fleece*, &c., appears to express in other words what had been already said.

10 *Itself* would seem to be equivalent to "nature itself."

12 *Robbing no old*, &c.—These words and the two lines preceding may be taken to explain the "holy" of line 9, which can scarcely be used of moral purity. See the Sonnet following.

LXIX.

Those parts of thee that the world's eye doth view,
Want nothing that the thought of hearts can mend :
All tongues (the voice of souls) give thee that due,
Uttering bare truth, even so as foes commend.
Thy outward thus with outward praise is crown'd ;
But those same tongues that give thee so thine own,
In other accents do this praise confound,
By seeing farther than the eye hath shown.
They look into the beauty of thy mind.
And that, in guess, they measure by thy deeds ;
Then (churls) their thoughts, although their eyes were kind,
To thy fair flower add the rank smell of weeds :
But why thy odour matcheth not thy show,
The solve is this,—that thou dost common grow.

LXIX. The poet asserts that his friend's beauty is perfect. This all cordially admitted. Nevertheless it was alleged that his friend's moral character was not conformable to his outward appearance. The latter was a "fair flower," while the former was acquiring "the rank smell of weeds." The cause of this was a want of sufficient care with regard to companions, thus allowing too great facility of access.

4 *Even so as foes commend.*—Meaning, apparently, "for in like manner even foes commend, stinting their praise as much as possible."

5 *Thy.*—Q. has "Their."

7 *Confound.*—Abate and nullify.

8 *By seeing farther.*—As they pretend.

9 *The beauty of thy mind.*—Said possibly not without a shade of irony.

10 *Thy deeds.*—As to the general nature of these we can form a probable guess from what had occurred with regard to Shakespeare's mistress. Cf. xl. *al.*

11 *Their thoughts.*—The conclusions they formed.

13 *Odour*, of course, is "reputation."

14 *The solve,—i.e.*, the solution, the explanation. Q. has "solye," but there can be little doubt that the emendation "solve" is right.

LXX.

That thou art blam'd shall not be thy defect,
For slander's mark was ever yet the fair;
The ornament of beauty is suspect,
A crow that flies in heaven's sweetest air.
So thou be good, slander doth but approve
Thy worth the greater, being woo'd of time:
For canker vice the sweetest buds doth love,
And thou present'st a pure unstained prime.
Thou hast pass'd by the ambush of young days,
Either not assail'd, or victor being charg'd;
Yet this thy praise cannot be so thy praise,
To tie up envy, evermore enlarg'd:
If some suspect of ill mask'd not thy show,
Then thou alone kingdoms of hearts should'st owe.

LXX. After the hint given to his friend in the preceding Sonnet, the poet declares that the allegations referred to were slanders, the result of suspicion. Slander ever fastens on the purest characters. His friend's prime was unstained, such an affair as that with the poet's mistress not being regarded, apparently, as involving serious moral blemish. Moreover, there had been forgiveness; and the special reference here may be to some charge of which Mr. W. H. was innocent. But (as in lxxix.) Shakespeare can scarcely escape the charge of adulation. This Sonnet was probably intended to mitigate the influence of what had been said in lxix.

1 Blame is no proof of blameworthiness.

3 Suspicion is so usually associated with beauty that it may be regarded as its wonted ornament.

5 *So thou be good.*—If thou be good.

6 *Being woo'd of time.*—This must be taken, it would seem, with "slander" of line 5. The sense will then be that "slander coming under the soothing influence of time will show thy worth to be greater;" or, "slander will turn to praise in course of time, and your true character will shine forth." *Thy* at beginning of this line is in Q. "Their."

7 *For canker vice,* &c.—This line has been illustrated by "As the most forward bud is eaten by the canker ere it blow," &c., *Two Gentlemen of Verona,* Act i. sc. 1, lines 45, 46. But the "canker vice" of our text is slander or envy.

9 *The ambush of young days.*—The vices to which youth is prone.

10 *Charg'd.*—Attacked, assailed.

11, 12 Yet this praise of thine cannot have such efficacy as to restrain envy, which is ever busy.

13, 14 If the influence of thy beauty were not abated by evil suspicion all would be devoted to thee. *Owe.*—Possess, as elsewhere.

LXXI.

No longer mourn for me when I am dead
Than you shall hear the surly sullen bell
Give warning to the world that I am fled
From this vile world, with vilest worms to dwell :
Nay, if you read this line, remember not
The hand that writ it ; for I love you so,
That I in your sweet thoughts would be forgot,
If thinking on me then should make you woe.
O if (I say) you look upon this verse,
When I, perhaps compounded am with clay,
Do not so much as my poor name rehearse ;
But let your love even with my life decay :
Lest the wise world should look into your moan,
And mock you with me after I am gone.

LXXI. The melancholy train of thought, interrupted to some extent by the last two Sonnets, reappears. As Dowden observes, "The world in this Sonnet is the 'vile world' described in lxvi." In the same Sonnet (lxvi.) the poet had spoken of dying and leaving his "love" alone. The friend is now implored to desist from mourning when the bell ceases to toll. The poet's love for him is so deep that he would not wish him to suffer from prolonged grief. Besides, ridicule might be incurred by any protracted grief for a person so little worthy of consideration.

2 *The surly sullen bell.*—The tolling bell is spoken of as "surly" and "sullen," not so much, perhaps, with reference to what it imports as to the abrupt suddenness of the stroke, and the want of that musical continuity which characterises chimes. Comparison has been made of the "sullen bell" "knolling a departed friend" in 2 *Henry IV.*, Act i. sc. 1, lines 102, 103.

4 *Vilest.*—Q. has "vildest," according to the old form "vild" or "vilde" for "vile."

10 *When I perhaps compounded am with clay.*—Somewhat similarly has been compared 2 *Henry IV.*, Act iv. sc. 5, lines 116, 117 :—

> "Only compound me with forgotten dust ;
> Give that which gave thee life unto the worms."

LXXII.

O, LEST the world should task you to recite
What merit lived in me, that you should love
After my death,—dear love, forget me quite,
For you in me can nothing worthy prove;
Unless you would devise some virtuous lie,
To do more for me than mine own desert,
And hang more praise upon deceased I
Than niggard truth would willingly impart;
O, lest your true love may seem false in this,
That you for love speak well of me untrue,
My name be buried where my body is,
And live no more to shame nor me nor you.
For I am sham'd by that which I bring forth,
And so should you, to love things nothing worth.

LXXII. Continues the subject of the preceding Sonnet. The poet has no merits worthy of deep grief or prolonged remembrance. He feels ashamed of his productions; and his friend ought to have the same feeling.

8 *Than niggard truth.*—Than strict truth.

9, 10 *Lest your true love,* &c.—Lest the reality of your love for me should be questioned or denied, when the falsity of your eulogies has been detected.

10 *Untrue.*—Untruly.

12 *And live no more,* &c.—Since the poet's name would recall the poet's works.

LXXIII.

That time of year thou may'st in me behold
When yellow leaves, or none, or few, do hang
Upon those boughs which shake against the cold,
Bare ruin'd choirs, where late the sweet birds sang,
In me thou see'st the twilight of such day,
As after sunset fadeth in the west,
Which by-and-by black night doth take away,
Death's second self, that seals up all in rest.
In me thou see'st the glowing of such fire,
That on the ashes of his youth doth lie,
As the death-bed whereon it must expire,
Consum'd with that which it was nourish'd by.
This thou perceiv'st, which makes thy love more strong
To love that well which thou must leave ere long:

LXXIII. The poet feels that his age is declining. If life is regarded as a year, its autumn is present with him; if as a day, its evening twilight; if as a fire, glowing ashes alone remain. Death will soon draw the curtain of night over all; but his friend's love is made stronger by anticipations of this approaching end.

3 *Which shake against the cold.*—Which shake as the cold winds of autumn blow upon them.

4 *Bare ruin'd choirs.*—The trees on whose branches the birds sang during spring and summer are compared to the ruins of cathedral-choirs, where once were heard the voices of the choristers and the pealing notes of the organ. Q. has "rn'wd quiers."

12 *Consum'd with that which it was nourish'd by.*—The fire and fuel pass away together.

LXXIV.

But be contented: when that fell arrest
Without all bail shall carry me away,
My life hath in this line some interest,
Which for memorial still with thee shall stay.
When thou reviewest this, thou dost review
The very part was consecrate to thee.
The earth can have but earth, which is his due;
My spirit is thine, the better part of me:
So then thou hast but lost the dregs of life,
The prey of worms, my body being dead;
The coward conquest of a wretch's knife,
Too base of thee to be remembered.
The worth of that, is that which it contains,
And that is this, and this with thee remains.

LXXIV. In lxxii. the poet had said that it would be better that both he and his works should be forgotten, neither the one nor the other having just claim to immortality. He now reverts to the thought that his verse will live when he is dead. His spirit and life are there treasured up for "a life beyond life." Death can only prey on "the dregs of life."

1 *But be contented.*—Looks back to the last line of lxxiii. *That fell arrest.*—Cf. *Hamlet*, Act v. sc. 2, lines 347, 348:—

> "Had I but time (as this fell serjeant Death
> Is strict in his arrest), O, I could tell you."

"Fell" means "harsh," "inexorable."

2 *Without all bail.*—Accepting no bail.

3 My living powers will still express themselves in these poems. *Interest.*—Property. Cf. xxxi. 7.

6 Cf. Martial, *Ep.* vii. 84, "Certior in nostro carmine vultus erit." The language of our text is stronger, speaking of the inner man, which is thoroughly identified with the written verse (line 8).

11 *The coward conquest of a wretch's knife.*—There is no reason whatever for supposing from this line that Shakespeare had encountered highwaymen or assassins to whose violence he had succumbed, and who had left him half-dead. The meaning is, that what of him had not been treasured up in his verse was mean and base, liable to succumb to the assassin's knife.

13 *The worth of that.*—Of the body. *Is that which it contains,—i.e.*, the spirit (line 8).

14 *And that is this.*—Identified and incorporated with my verse.

LXXV.

So are you to my thoughts, as food to life,
Or as sweet-season'd showers are to the ground ;
And for the peace of you I hold such strife
As 'twixt a miser and his wealth is found :
Now proud as an enjoyer, and anon
Doubting the filching age will steal his treasure ;
Now counting best to be with you alone,
Then better'd that the world may see my pleasure :
Sometime, all full with feasting on your sight,
And by-and-by clean starved for a look ;
Possessing or pursuing no delight,
Save what is had or must from you be took.
Thus do I pine and surfeit day by day,
Or gluttoning on all, or all away.

LXXV. Descants on the preciousness of the treasure which the poet finds in his friend, and probably gives indication of a rising or growing feeling of jealousy with regard to a rival.

2 *Sweet-season'd showers.*—Showers seasonable and refreshing.

3 *The peace of you.*—Perhaps best understood as meaning "the peaceable possession of you."

6 *Doubting the filching age will steal his treasure.*—"Perhaps this is the first allusion to the poet, Shakespeare's rival, in his friend's favour." —DOWDEN.

8 At other times valuing my treasure more when others see what a prize I hold.

10 *Clean starved for a look.*—Cf. the expression still used "*clean* gone."

11–14 The poet has no other source of pleasure than that to be found in his friend, whose presence yields the most intense and eagerly enjoyed delight. When his friend is absent "all is away."

LXXVI.

Why is my verse so barren of new pride?
So far from variation or quick change?
Why, with the time, do I not glance aside
To new-found methods and to compounds strange?
Why write I still all one, ever the same,
And keep invention in a noted weed,
That every word doth almost tell my name,
Showing their birth, and where they did proceed?
O know, sweet love, I always write of you,
And you and love are still my argument;
So all my best is dressing old words new,
Spending again what is already spent:
For as the sun is daily new and old,
So is my love still telling what is told.

LXXVI. May be regarded as an answer to objections which the poet imagined as made against his Sonnets, or which possibly had been really made by a rival, that they contained no brilliant novelties, and that their mode of expression displayed, not versatility, but a monotonous repetition which proclaimed the author in almost every word. The poet does not deny the charge, but replies that he is always descanting on the same old theme—his friend, and the constant affection he bears towards him.

1 *So barren of new pride.*—So destitute of novel imagery, diction, &c.

2–4 These lines may allude to Shakespeare's unwillingness to adopt the mode of expression and the poetical form employed by his rivals.

4 The *new-found methods* and the *compounds strange* may very well refer to the novel compound words employed by Chapman to express Homeric epithets. In the Address "To the Understander" prefixed to the *Shield of Achilles* (1598), Chapman defends himself against the charge of introducing new words without propriety, and cites the example of Chaucer. Chapman's critics are like a brood of frogs from a ditch, desiring "to have the ceaseless flowing river of our tongue turned into their frog-pool."

6 *Keep invention in a noted weed.*—Express and clothe my thoughts in the same familiar dress.

7 *Tell.*—Q. has "fel."

11 *My best is dressing old words new.*—Making but a slight difference in the expressions. The poet, no doubt, means thus to imply the constancy of his affection.

LXXVII.

Thy glass will show thee how thy beauties wear,
Thy dial how thy precious minutes waste ;
The vacant leaves thy mind's imprint will bear,
And of this book this learning may'st thou taste.
The wrinkles which thy glass will truly show,
Of mouthed graves will give thee memory ;
Thou by thy dial's shady stealth may'st know
Time's thievish progress to eternity.
Look, what thy memory cannot contain,
Commit to these waste blanks, and thou shalt find
Those children nurs'd, deliver'd from thy brain,
To take a new acquaintance of thy mind.
These offices, so oft as thou wilt look,
Shall profit thee, and much enrich thy book.

LXXVII. The view is probably correct which takes this and the two preceding Sonnets as forming a distinct group, and which infers that when they were sent to Mr. W. H. there was sent with them a present consisting of a mirror, a sundial, and a manuscript-book, each of these being in some sort symbolical, betokening the decay of beauty, the never-resting progress of time, and the antidote to both time and decay to be found in literary composition.

1 *Wear.*—Q. "were."

3 *The vacant leaves.*—That is, as I think, the whole of the leaves of the manuscript-book. I do not feel able to accept the view of Dowden that Shakespeare sent to Mr. W. H. a manuscript-book *partially* vacant, as an intimation of unwillingness to write any more Sonnets, on account of the favour shown to the rival-poet.

4 *This learning may'st thou taste.*—This lesson may'st thou derive.

5–12 The lesson is, that while wrinkles seen in the mirror foretoken the approach of Death and the shadow stealing round the dial, the "thievish progress of Time," security against oblivion may be found by committing thought to writing.

6 *Mouthed graves.*—A stronger expression than the "lines," "parallels," and "trenches," which had been previously used of wrinkles ; and this is in accordance with the deeper melancholy of these later Sonnets.

10 *Blanks.*—I have adopted the emendation of Theobald. Q. has "blacks," which could only be defended on the supposition of a note-book whose leaves were prepared with some black substance. *Waste* will equal the "vacant" of l. 3.

11 Notice that literary children, "children of the brain," have taken the place of the natural children of the first Sonnets. This is in accord with the deepened melancholy.

12 *To take a new acquaintance.*—They will become "objective," and objects of great interest.

13 *These offices.*—"The delivery from the brain," and "nursing" or moulding into due form of these literary children, will, as often as you look at them with parental care and affection, &c.

LXXVIII.

So oft have I invok'd thee for my Muse,
And found such fair assistance in my verse,
As every alien pen hath got my use,
And under thee their poesy disperse.
Thine eyes, that taught the dumb on high to sing,
And heavy ignorance aloft to fly,
Have added feathers to the learned's wing,
And given grace a double majesty.
Yet be most proud of that which I compile,
Whose influence is thine, and born of thee :
In others' works thou dost but mend the style,
And arts with thy sweet graces graced be ;
  But thou art all my art, and dost advance
  As high as learning my rude ignorance.

LXXVIII. There is now a more distinct mention of the rivalry previously alluded to. Shakespeare, however, claims special regard from his friend and patron, alleging that, destitute of learning, his friend alone had inspired his verses.

3 *As.*—That. It may be doubted whether the words "every alien pen" require us to suppose that Shakespeare had more than one rival in the favour of Mr. W. H. See lxxix. 4. *Got my use.*—"Acquired my habit [of writing verse to you]."—DOWDEN.

4 *Under thee.*—Under thy auspices.

7 *The learned's wing.*—To the wing of the poet's "learned" rival. The word "learned" suits very well the Greek scholar, Chapman.

8 *A double majesty.*—An expression quite suitable if Shakespeare has in view Chapman's Homeric translation.

9 *Compile.*—Compose.

10 *Born of thee.*—Q. has "borne," and it is just possible that this *may* mean "supported and borne aloft by thee." But cf. Introd., p. 14.

12, 13 *Arts—art.*—May be understood of "learning." Cf. lxvi. 9. But there is reference here to poetical style.

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LXXIX.

Whilst I alone did call upon thy aid,
My verse alone had all thy gentle grace;
But now my gracious numbers are decay'd,
And my sick Muse doth give another place.
I grant, sweet love, thy lovely argument
Deserves the travail of a worthier pen;
Yet what of thee thy poet doth invent,
He robs thee of, and pays it thee again.
He lends thee virtue, and he stole that word
From thy behaviour; beauty doth he give,
And found it in thy cheek; he can afford
No praise to thee but what in thee doth live.
Then thank him not for that which he doth say,
Since what he owes thee thou thyself dost pay.

LXXIX. Mentions more expressly a single rival, to whom, it is alleged, Mr. W. H. is under no obligation whatever, while Shakespeare's verse meanwhile suffers; his Muse is "sick."

2 *Thy gentle grace.*—Thy gentle and gracious influence.

5 *Thy lovely argument.*—The subject of thy beauty.

7 *Thy poet.*—That is, the rival of Shakespeare. *What of thee.*—What concerning thee.

8–10 Notice the derogatory expressions *robs* and *stole*. *Virtue—behaviour.* Cf. lxx., especially lines 8–10, as to Mr. W. H.'s "virtue."

LXXX.

O, how I faint when I of you do write,
Knowing a better spirit doth use your name,
And in the praise thereof spends all his might,
To make me tongue-tied, speaking of your fame!
But since your worth (wide as the ocean is),
The humble as the proudest sail doth bear,
My saucy bark, inferior far to his,
On your broad main doth wilfully appear.
Your shallowest help will hold me up afloat,
Whilst he upon your soundless deep doth ride;
Or, being wreck'd, I am a worthless boat,
He of tall building, and of goodly pride:
Then if he thrive, and I be cast away,
The worst was this;—my love was my decay.

LXXX. Speaks apparently of poems composed by the rival-poet in praise of Mr. W. H., which have not come down to us. Shakespeare and his rival are compared to two vessels floating on the broad ocean of Mr. W. H.'s patronage. Shakespeare's verse is but a slight and worthless boat "saucily" and "wilfully" presuming on Mr. W. H.'s favour. But his rival "rides on a soundless deep," a ship "of tall building and of goodly pride;" a description suitable to the position that Shakespeare's rival was George Chapman. Contemplating his rival's superior powers, which are all engaged in Mr. W. H.'s praise, Shakespeare professes to lose heart and "faint."

2–4 The "better spirit," the poet of supposed superior endowments, endeavours by the superiority of his verses, to stop Shakespeare's utterances.

7 *My saucy bark.*—Cf. *Troilus and Cressida*, Act i. sc. 3, lines 35–45, and Act ii. sc. 3, end:—

> "The sea being smooth,
> How many shallow bauble boats dare sail
> Upon her patient breast, making their way
> With those of nobler bulk!
> But let the ruffian Boreas once enrage
> The gentle Thetis, and, anon, behold
> The strong-ribb'd bark through liquid mountains cut,
> Bounding between the two moist elements,
> Like Perseus' horse: where's then the saucy boat,
> Whose weak untimber'd sides but even now
> Co-rivall'd greatness? either to harbour fled,
> Or made a toast for Neptune."
>
> "Let Achilles sleep:
> Light boats sail swift, though greater hulks draw deep."

Inferior far to his.—Self-depreciation of this kind is, of course, not to be taken too literally.

14 *My love was my decay.*—That is, the cause of my ruin, by impelling me to write poems in your praise, and bringing bitter disappointment.

LXXXI.

Or I shall live your epitaph to make,
Or you survive when I in earth am rotten ;
From hence your memory death cannot take,
Although in me each part will be forgotten.
Your name from hence immortal life shall have,
Though I, once gone, to all the world must die :
The earth can yield me but a common grave,
When you entombed in men's eyes shall lie.
Your monument shall be my gentle verse,
Which eyes not yet created shall o'er-read ;
And tongues to be, your being shall rehearse,
When all the breathers of this world are dead ;
You still shall live (such virtue hath my pen)
Where breath most breathes,—even in the mouths of men.

LXXXI. Self-depreciation here takes another form. Shakespeare himself must die and his personality be forgotten. Nevertheless his verse will be an enduring monument to his friend, whose praises will live in the mouths of unborn generations.

3 *From hence.*—From these poems.

4 *In me each part.*—Every part of me.

11 *Your being shall rehearse.*—Shall tell of what you were.

12 *The breathers of this world.*—This present generation.

14 *Where breath most breathes.*—Though those who at present breathe must die, you shall still live in the intensity of life, in the very breath, of those who are yet unborn.

LXXXII.

I GRANT thou wert not married to my Muse,
And therefore may'st without attaint o'erlook
The dedicated words which writers use
Of their fair subject, blessing every book.
Thou art as fair in knowledge as in hue,
Finding thy worth a limit past my praise;
And therefore art enforc'd to seek anew
Some fresher stamp of the time-bettering days.
And do so, love; yet when they have devis'd
What strained touches rhetorick can lend,
Thou truly fair wert truly sympathis'd
In true plain words, by thy true-telling friend;
And their gross painting might be better us'd
Where cheeks need blood; in thee it is abus'd.

LXXXII. The poet admits that his friend could plead justification for showing some countenance to his rival. Mr. W. H. had never promised to exclude all others from his favour. Moreover, his merits were so great that he might well seek the aid of another poet to set them forth more fully. But there was thus a danger of flattery. Shakespeare claims the merit of faithfulness and truth.

1 *Not married to my Muse.*—Dowden suggests, "His friend had perhaps alleged in playful self-justification that he had not married Shakspere's Muse, vowing to forsake all other, and keep only unto her."

3 *Dedicated words.*—Taking into account the next line, which speaks, apparently, of "blessing" a book by lines in praise of Mr. W. H., the "fair subject," there is possibly reference to a dedication either actual or proposed.

5 On this line Professor Dowden says, "Shakspere had celebrated his friend's beauty (hue); perhaps his learned rival had celebrated the patron's knowledge; such excellence reached 'a limit past the praise' of Shakspere, who knew small Latin and less Greek." Subsequently, in the title to a Sonnet accompanying his translation of the *Iliad*, Chapman addressed Pembroke as "the Learned and Most Noble Patron of Learning," and the Sonnet celebrates Pembroke's "god-like learning."

6 *Finding thy worth.*—If the view just given of the last line be accepted, then "finding thy worth" will be equivalent to "and thus findest thy worth."

8 *Some fresher stamp*, &c.—Some poet whose method and diction are in better accord with the more advanced ideas of the times.

10 The verses of the rival-poet in praise of Mr. W. H. not being extant, it is impossible to say whether they surpassed those of Shakespeare in flattery and inflated praise, the "strained touches" of "rhetorick."

11 *Sympathis'd.*—Implying that Shakespeare's verse came from the heart. Similarly the lines in *Lucrece* which have been compared,—

> "True sorrow then is *feelingly suffic'd*
> When with like semblance it is *sympathis'd*."

LXXXIII.

I NEVER saw that you did painting need,
And therefore to your fair no painting set;
I found, or thought I found, you did exceed
The barren tender of a poet's debt:
And therefore have I slept in your report,
That you yourself, being extant, well might show
How far a modern quill doth come too short,
Speaking of worth—what worth in you doth grow!
This silence for my sin you did impute,
Which shall be most my glory, being dumb;
For I impair not beauty being mute,
When others would give life, and bring a tomb.
There lives more life in one of your fair eyes
Than both your poets can in praise devise.

LXXXII. In close connection with the preceding Sonnet. Shakespeare, in his verses, had allowed Mr. W. H.'s excellences to speak for themselves, despairing of rendering them adequately, and fearing lest he should impair them by eulogy. He had been "dumb" and had "slept."

2 *Your fair.*—Your beauty.

4 *The barren tender of a poet's debt.*—Whatever a poet might offer to pay in the way of praise would be "barren," as not coming up to your deserts.

5 *Therefore have I slept in your report.*—So that you might speak therein for yourself, or, rather, that your beauty might speak.

6 *Being extant.*—Being present in person to manifest your beauty.

7 *A modern quill.*—The pen, most probably, of the rival-poet, the "fresher stamp of the time-bettering days" of lxxxii. To take "modern" in the sense of "trivial" seems to me unsatisfactory both in this place and in *Antony and Cleopatra*, Act v. sc. 2, lines 166, 167,—

> "Immoment toys, things of such dignity
> As we greet modern friends withal."

The idea, as I take it, is that Mr. W. H. himself, being extant in Shakespeare's verse, proved how unsuitable and injurious was the "gross painting" of his rival.

8 *Grow.*—This word may *possibly* mean "doth grow as a poet contemplates, and attempts to describe your worth," or the word may allude to Mr. W. H.'s still immature youth. The punctuation I have given is perhaps, on the whole, most probable.

9 *Did impute.*—Probably, by showing favour to the rival-poet.

12 *Bring a tomb.*—Concealing you from view by their lavish eulogies.

14 *Both your poets* may be taken to imply that Shakespeare had *two* rivals. But this is perhaps doubtful. More probably the two poets are Shakespeare and his rival.

LXXXIV.

Who is it that says most? which can say more
Than this rich praise,—that you alone are you?
In whose confine immured is the store
Which should example where your equal grew.
Lean penury within that pen doth dwell,
That to his subject lends not some small glory;
But he that writes of you, if he can tell
That you are you, so dignifies his story.
Let him but copy what in you is writ,
Not making worse what Nature made so clear,
And such a counter-part shall fame his wit,
Making his style admired everywhere.
You to your beauteous blessings add a curse,
Being fond on praise which makes your praises worse.

LXXXIV. Still in close continuation. The mere description of Mr. W. H. is by far the highest praise.

1 *Who is it that says most?*—Which of the two, the describer, or the eulogist?

3, 4 *In whose confine*, &c.—You are unparalleled: you yourself furnish the only example with which you can be compared.

8 *So dignifies.*—With a full stop at the end of the line, as in Q., "so dignifies" is equivalent to "thus dignifies," "thus gives the greatest dignity to."

10 *So clear.*—So manifest, and of such shining beauty.

11 *Such a counter-part.*—A description answering so perfectly to the truth.

13 *Your beauteous blessings.*—The beauties with which Nature has blessed you. *Add a curse*,—by accepting poetical eulogies.

14 *Being fond on praise.*—Being fond of praise. *Which makes your praises.*—By which "your praise," the praise due to you, is really lessened and deteriorated.

LXXXV.

My tongue-tied Muse in manners holds her still,
While comments of your praise, richly compil'd,
[Rehearse thy] character with golden quill,
And precious phrase by all the Muses fil'd.
I think good thoughts, while others write good words,
And, like unlettered clerk, still cry 'Amen'
To every hymn that able spirit affords,
In polish'd form of well-refined pen.
Hearing you prais'd, I say, 'Tis so, 'tis true,'
And to the most of praise add something more ;
But that is in my thought, whose love to you,
Though words come hindmost, holds his rank before.
Then others for the breath of words respect,
Me for my dumb thoughts, speaking in effect.

LXXXV. A variation on the same general theme as before. Shakespeare is silent, while the rival-poet eulogises Mr. W. H. with great wealth of diction and metaphor. By his silence, Shakespeare merely assents to the truth and justness of the praise. In thought, however, he would add thereto, deeming it inadequate. And for his "dumb thoughts" he asks the consideration of his friend.

1 *My tongue-tied Muse.*—The poet might be regarded as "tongue-tied," because his thoughts transcend the power of words (cf. lines 11–14). *In manners.*—With decorous respect. Notice, however, the different explanation of the silence given in the next Sonnet (lines 3, 13, 14).

3 [*Rehearse thy*] *character.*—Q. has "Reserue their character," which is unintelligible. Probably "their," as elsewhere, represents "thy." "Rehearse," suggested by an anonymous critic, is not an improbable emendation. With the spelling "reherse," it comes near to "reserve." "Character" must be taken, as in some other places, to denote "face," "appearance." Cf. *Twelfth Night*, Act i. sc. 2, lines 50, 51 :—

> "I will believe thou hast a mind that suits
> With this thy fair and outward character"—

a very good example. See also *Coriolanus*, Act ii. sc. 1, lines 70, 71,— "What harm can your bisson conspectuities glean out of this character?"

4 *Fil'd.*—Polished and elaborated. Cf. line 8.

6 *Unlettered clerk*, &c.—Fully admitting at once what is said.

7 *That able spirit.*—That great poet, though there is possibly an allusion to Chapman's special claim to inspiration.

14 *Speaking in effect.*—Speaking in thought and purpose. Cf. xxiii. and notes.

LXXXVI.

Was it the proud full sail of his great verse,
Bound for the prize of all-too-precious you,
That did my ripe thoughts in my brain inhearse,
Making their tomb the womb wherein they grew?
Was it his spirit, by spirits taught to write
Above a mortal pitch, that struck me dead?
No, neither he, nor his compeers by night
Giving him aid, my verse astonished.
He, nor that affable familiar ghost
Which nightly gulls him with intelligence,
As victors, of my silence cannot boast;
I was not sick of any fear from thence.
But when your countenance fil'd up his line,
Then lack'd I matter; that enfeebled mine.

LXXXVI. The poet maintains that the silence which he had previously mentioned was not caused by dismay at the achievements of his rival, nor at such supernatural or other aid as his rival may have secured. It was because Mr. W. H. had given countenance to this rival's poetry that his own powers had fainted and failed.

1 *The proud full sail of his great verse.*—Suiting well the grand fourteen-syllable lines of Chapman's *Iliad*, as pointed out by Professor Minto.

3 *Inhearse.*—Entomb, so that Shakespeare could say nothing.

5, 6 *By spirits taught to write*, &c.—Cf. the quotation given below, line 9.

7 *His compeers by night.*—Cf. Chapman's *Shadow of Night*, quoted by Professor Minto, *Characteristics of English Poets*, p. 291:—

> "All you possessed with indepressed spirits,
> Endued with nimble and aspiring wits,
> Come consecrate with me to sacred Night
> Your whole endeavours and detest the light."

9 *Nor that affable familiar ghost*, &c.—Cf. Dedication to *Shadow of Night*, also quoted by Minto:—

"Now what a supererogation in wit this is, to think Skill so mightily pierced with their loves that she should prostitutely show them her secrets, when she will scarcely be looked upon by others but with invocation, fasting, watching, yea, not without having drops of their souls *like a heavenly familiar.*"

13 *Fil'd.*—It is perhaps doubtful whether the "fild" of Q. should be represented by "fil'd" or "fill'd." The latter would suit very well the "lacking matter" of line 14.

14 *Then lack'd I matter.*—Cf. *Troilus and Cressida*, Act ii. sc. 3, lines 103, 104,—"Then will Ajax lack matter, if he have lost his argument."

LXXXVII.

Farewell! thou art too dear for my possessing,
And like enough thou know'st thy estimate;
The charter of thy worth gives thee releasing;
My bonds in thee are all determinate.
For how do I hold thee but by thy granting?
And for that riches where is my deserving?
The cause of this fair gift in me is wanting,
And so my patent back again is swerving.
Thyself thou gav'st, thy own worth then not knowing,
Or me, to whom thou gav'st it, else mistaking;
So thy great gift, upon misprision growing,
Comes home again, on better judgment making.
Thus have I had thee, as a dream doth flatter,
In sleep a king, but waking, no such matter.

LXXXVII. Shakespeare, piqued apparently because Mr. W. H. will not renounce the rival-poet, utters a farewell. Mr. W. H.'s favour and patronage had been granted only during pleasure; so that there was no ground for complaint in their recall; but the poet is as one awaking from a dream. This "farewell" is probably intended, like Ophelia's return of Hamlet's "remembrances," to evoke a renewed avowal of affection.

2 *Thy estimate.*—The value at which thou art to be appraised.

3 *The charter of thy worth.*—The charter by which thy worth was ceded to me.

4 *Determinate.*—Cf. xiii. 5, 6.

6 *That riches.*—Cf. *cette richesse.*

6–12 The cause of the release and revocation is, that the grant had been made in error. *Patent* in line 8, instead of "charter" in line 3.

11 *Upon misprision growing.*—Upon its becoming clear that you had made a mistake. Cf. old French *mesprison*, which Cotgrave explains by "misprision," "error," &c.

12 *Comes home again.*—Returns to you.

LXXXVIII.

When thou shalt be dispos'd to set me light,
And place my merit in the eye of Scorn,
Upon thy side against myself I'll fight,
And prove thee virtuous, though thou art forsworn.
With mine own weakness being best acquainted,
Upon thy part I can set down a story
Of faults conceal'd, wherein I am attainted;
That thou, in losing me, shalt win much glory;
And I by this will be a gainer too;
For bending all my loving thoughts on thee,
The injuries that to myself I do,
Doing thee vantage, double-vantage me.
Such is my love, to thee I so belong,
That for thy right myself will bear all wrong.

LXXXVIII. If Mr. W. H. is disposed to break off the acquaintance on account of blemishes and faults in the poet, the poet will not defend or extenuate, but will enlarge the catalogue of his defects, as knowing much which no other can tell. Thus, for the love of his friend, he will take his friend's side against himself.

1 *Dispos'd.*—Q. has the misprint "dispode."

2 *Place my merit in the eye of Scorn.*—Regard me with scorn.

4 *Forsworn.*—As pledged to a life-long friendship.

7 *Of faults conceal'd*, &c.—Cf. *Hamlet*, "I am myself indifferent honest, but yet I could accuse me of such things, that it were better my mother had not borne me," Act iii. sc. 1, lines 123–126.

8 *Shalt.*—Q. has "shall."

12 *Double-vantage me.*—The poet, it would seem, claims that his affection to his friend is so strong, that, whatever satisfaction his friend may find in setting forth his faults, this satisfaction will be doubled to himself.

LXXXIX.

Say that thou didst forsake me for some fault,
And I will comment upon that offence :
Speak of my lameness, and I straight will halt ;
Against thy reasons making no defence.
Thou canst not, love, disgrace me half so ill,
To set a form upon desired change,
As I'll myself disgrace : knowing thy will,
I will acquaintance strangle, and look strange ;
Be absent from thy walks ; and in my tongue
Thy sweet beloved name no more shall dwell ;
Lest I (too much profane) should do it wrong,
And haply of our old acquaintance tell.
For thee, against myself I'll vow debate,
For I must ne'er love him whom thou dost hate.

LXXXIX. In close continuation of the preceding Sonnet. To serve his friend, the poet will not only magnify his own faults, but will act as though the acquaintance had never been formed ; nay, he will hate himself.

2 *Comment.*—Expatiate upon the fault, and so magnify it.

3 *Lameness.*—Perhaps, if this line stood alone, it might be thought possible that Shakespeare had contracted a temporary lameness. But we must take into account xxxvii. 3 and context. See notes there.

6 *To set a form upon desired change.*—To justify before the world the breach of acquaintance which thou desirest.

8 *Strangle.*—Notice the effort apparently implied in this word. Cf. *Troilus and Cressida*, Act iv. sc. 4, lines 39, 40 :—

"Strangles our dear vows
Even in the birth of our own labouring breath."

13 *Debate.*—Conflict, hostility.

XC.

THEN hate me when thou wilt ; if ever, now ;
Now, while the world is bent my deeds to cross,
Join with the spite of Fortune, make me bow,
And do not drop in for an after-loss :
Ah ! do not, when my heart hath scap'd this sorrow,
Come in the rearward of a conquer'd woe ;
Give not a windy night a rainy morrow,
To linger out a purpos'd overthrow.
If thou wilt leave me, do not leave me last,
When other petty griefs have done their spite,
But in the onset come ; so shall I taste
At first the very worst of Fortune's might ;
And other strains of woe, which now seem woe,
Compar'd with loss of thee will not seem so.

XC. The poet is suffering from other troubles or misfortunes, "petty griefs" and "strains of woe." But he would rather feel at once the full force of what Fortune can do. If his friend is determined to break off the acquaintance, he would rather that this should occur immediately. Probably we ought to read between the lines an appeal for Mr. W. H.'s pity and sympathy.

4–12 *Drop in for an after-loss*, &c.—Lengthen out my troubles by delay.

6 *Come in the rearward of a conquer'd woe.*—Malone compared the use of "rearward" in *Much Ado about Nothing*, Act iv. sc. 1, lines 127–129 :—

> "Thought I thy spirit were stronger than thy shames,
> Myself would, on the rearward of reproaches,
> Strike at thy life."

13, 14 Nay ; if you withdraw from me now, my present troubles will be relieved and disappear, swallowed up in the far greater grief occasioned by the loss of you. The expression "strains of woe" may be taken as nearly equivalent to "kinds of woe," though there is probably added the idea of extension or lengthening.

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XCI.

Some glory in their birth, some in their skill,
Some in their wealth, some in their body's force ;
Some in their garments, though new-fangled ill ;
Some in their hawks and hounds, some in their horse ;
And every humour hath his adjunct pleasure,
Wherein it finds a joy above the rest ;
But these particulars are not my measure,
All these I better in one general best.
Thy love is better than high birth to me,
Richer than wealth, prouder than garments' cost,
Of more delight than hawks or horses be ;
And having thee, of all men's pride I boast.
Wretched in this alone, that thou may'st take
All this away, and me most wretched make.

XCI. Other men have various objects of supreme interest, or advantages in which they take pride ; but the poet takes pride only in his friend. The possibility of losing him is the poet's only source of anxiety and wretchedness.

3 *Though new-fangled ill.*—However unsuitable, though fashionable.

7, 8 But these particular pursuits and objects of interest do not concern me or apply to me. I have one object of interest better than all these, to me the best, yielding as much delight and pride as all the rest combined.

XCII.

But do thy worst to steal thyself away,
For term of life thou art assured mine ;
And life no longer than thy love will stay,
For it depends upon that love of thine.
Then need I not to fear the worst of wrongs,
When in the least of them my life hath end.
I see a better state to me belongs
Than that which on thy humour doth depend.
Thou canst not vex me with inconstant mind,
Since that my life on thy revolt doth lie.
O, what a happy title do I find,
Happy to have thy love, happy to die !
But what's so blessed-fair that fears no blot ?—
Thou may'st be false, and yet I know it not :

XCII. Closely connected with the preceding Sonnet, in the two last lines of which the poet speaks of his having only one cause of wretchedness, that he may lose his friend. Now he can find comfort even in this respect. His friend's love is assured to him for life ; for the loss of that love will involve the loss of life. Still there is a possibility that his friend's heart may be alienated, though an outward seeming of affection may be continued.

5–10 The poet cannot fear that continued wretchedness which he had dreaded, since the loss of his friend's affection will entail immediately the loss of life. The "worst of wrongs" will thus be the continued misery of living alienated. The "least of them" will allude to the loss of his friend's affection, and the loss of life is so closely linked therewith that the poet will feel no wretchedness. This is the "better state" which fears no continued "vexation." The pain caused by the loss of the friend's affection is the "least of wrongs" on account of its immediate termination.

XCIII.

So shall I live, supposing thou art true,
Like a deceived husband ; so love's face
May still seem love to me, though alter'd new ;
Thy looks with me, thy heart in other place :
For there can live no hatred in thine eye,
Therefore in that I cannot know thy change.
In many's looks the false heart's history
Is writ in moods and frowns and wrinkles strange ;
But Heaven in thy creation did decree,
That in thy face sweet love should ever dwell ;
Whate'er thy thoughts or thy heart's workings be,
Thy looks should nothing thence but sweetness tell.
How like Eve's apple doth thy beauty grow,
If thy sweet virtue answer not thy show !

XCIII. The supposition contained in the last line of xcii. is here enlarged upon. The poet's friend may still wear the semblance of love though his affection has been tranferred to another; for Nature has so moulded his face that it must ever wear the appearance of love, however changed may be his feelings.

3 *Though alter'd new.*—Though changed from the expression of real affection to its mere semblance.

13, 14 *How like Eve's apple,* &c.—The reality not agreeing with appearance and expectation.

XCIV.

They that have power to hurt and will do none,
That do not do the thing they most do show,
Who, moving others, are themselves as stone,
Unmoved, cold, and to temptation slow ;
They rightly do inherit heaven's graces,
And husband nature's riches from expense ;
They are the lords and owners of their faces,
Others but stewards of their excellence.
The summer's flower is to the summer sweet,
Though to itself it only live and die ;
But if that flower with base infection meet,
The basest weed out-braves his dignity ;
For sweetest things turn sourest by their deeds ;
Lilies that fester smell far worse than weeds.

XCIV. The poet, in the preceding Sonnet, had set forth the possibility of his friend being false at heart, although his countenance should give no indication of unfaithfulness. But the ability to restrain the expression of emotion, and not to publish to the world by changes of countenance the thoughts and feelings of the heart, may be regarded as a virtue, or at least as a valuable endowment. Persons of this temperament isolate themselves, it is true ; but this does not destroy their virtue. The flower is still sweet whose sweetness is wasted on the desert air. But such virtue when corrupted acquires an odour far ranker than that of undisguised profligacy or unrestrained passion.

1 *Have power to hurt and will do none.*—Are not impetuous and passionate.
2–8 Cf. *Hamlet*, Act iii. sc. 2, lines 70–76,—

> "Thou hast been
> As one, in suffering all, that suffers nothing ;
> A man that Fortune's buffets and rewards
> Has ta'en with equal thanks ; and blest are those
> Whose blood and judgment are so well commingled
> That they are not a pipe for Fortune's finger
> To sound what stop she please."

Shakespeare, himself perhaps very sensitive and quickly moved, may have appreciated too highly a different kind of character. As to the corruption of such a character as that here described, compare the portraiture of Angelo in *Measure for Measure*.
6 They do not expend their energies in passionate outbursts.
7 *They are the lords and owners of their faces.*—Not giving ready expression to emotion.
8 *Others but stewards.*—Passion being lord. 10 Cf. liv. 11.
14 *Fester.*—Corrupt. Persons of the character in question are colourless "lilies" rather than blushing roses. This line had previously appeared in *Edward III.*, a play some have attributed in part to Shakespeare.

XCV.

How sweet and lovely dost thou make the shame
Which, like a canker in the fragrant rose,
Doth spot the beauty of thy budding name!
O, in what sweets dost thou thy sins enclose!
That tongue that tells the story of thy days,
Making lascivious comments on thy sport,
Cannot dispraise but in a kind of praise;
Naming thy name blesses an ill report.
O what a mansion have those vices got,
Which for their habitation chose out thee!
Where beauty's veil doth cover every blot,
And all things turns to fair, that eyes can see!
Take heed, dear heart, of this large privilege;
The hardest knife ill-used doth lose his edge.

XCV. The scandal in relation to his friend, which the poet had previously mentioned and treated as slander, seems (if it be the same) now to have become too obviously true to admit of being rebutted or extenuated. But Mr. W. H.'s grace and beauty adorn and transfigure even his vices. Still there is danger, lest the consequence of vicious indulgence should be felt at last.

2 *Canker.*—A worm preying upon and defacing the blossom.

3 *Thy budding name.*—An expression which seems to agree very well with the youth of William Herbert, now about nineteen.

8 *Naming thy name*, &c.—In consequence of Mr. W. H.'s well-known grace and attractiveness.

12 *Turns.*—So Q. "turnes." "Beauty's veil turns all things to fair," &c.

14 *The hardest knife*, &c.—Alluding to the result of excessive indulgence.

XCVI.

Some say, thy fault is youth, some wantonness ;
Some say, thy grace is youth and gentle sport ;
Both grace and faults are lov'd of more and less :
Thou mak'st faults graces that to thee resort.
As on the finger of a throned queen
The basest jewel will be well esteem'd ;
So are those errors that in thee are seen,
To truths translated, and for true things deem'd.
How many lambs might the stern wolf betray,
If like a lamb he could his looks translate !
How many gazers might'st thou lead away,
If thou would'st use the strength of all thy state !
But do not so ; I love thee in such sort,
As thou being mine, mine is thy good report.

XCVI. Enlarges on the transfigurement of Mr. W. H.'s vices, and adverts in conclusion to the dangerous and seductive influence of his example. Even his faults are loved and admired.

1, 2 What some speak of as thy "fault" and "wantonness," others describe as "grace" and "gentle sport."

3 *Are lov'd of more and less.*—By persons of all sorts. *First Part of King Henry IV.*, Act iv. sc. 3, line 68,

"The more and less came in with cap and knee."

7, 8 *So are those errors—to truths translated.*—So are those vices changed to virtues.

10 If he could transform his appearance into that of a lamb.

12 *The strength of all thy state*—All the power of thy noble beauty.

13, 14 The leading many others astray might result in a reputation incurably bad. These lines are repeated from xxxvi.

XCVII.

How like a winter hath my absence been
From thee, the pleasure of the fleeting year!
What freezings have I felt, what dark days seen!
What old December's bareness everywhere! 4
And yet this time remov'd was summer's time;
The teeming autumn, big with rich increase,
Bearing the wanton burden of the prime,
Like widowed wombs after their lord's decease: 8
Yet this abundant issue seem'd to me
But hope of orphans, and unfather'd fruit:
For summer and his pleasures wait on thee,
And, thou away, the very birds are mute; 12
Or, if they sing, 'tis with so dull a cheer,
That leaves look pale, dreading the winter's near. 14

XCVII. In this Sonnet, which evidently commences a new group, the poet states that he has been away from his friend during the summer and autumn, seasons which had seemed to him cheerless as winter. The Sonnet was written apparently either in the autumn or at the beginning of winter, but probably the former (see lines 13, 14).

2 *From thee*,—"who art to me the pleasure," &c.

4 *Old December's bareness.*—Cf. v. 8.

6–8 *The teeming autumn*, &c.—Autumn pregnant with the fruits prepared by summer, a season now passed away.

9, 10 Like the hope of leaving posthumous offspring.

XCVIII.

From you have I been absent in the spring,
When proud-pied April, dress'd in all his trim,
Hath put a spirit of youth in everything,
That heavy Saturn laugh'd and leap'd with him.
Yet nor the lays of birds, nor the sweet smell
Of different flowers in odour and in hue,
Could make me any summer's story tell,
Or from their proud lap pluck them where they grew :
Nor did I wonder at the lilies white,
Nor praise the deep vermilion in the rose ;
They were but sweet, but figures of delight,
Drawn after you, you pattern of all those.
Yet seem'd it winter still, and, you away,
As with your shadow I with these did play :

XCVIII. It may seem doubtful whether this Sonnet is to be regarded as intimating that the poet had been absent from his friend during the spring which preceded the summer and autumn mentioned in the last Sonnet. But this was probably so, and to the poet it seemed winter notwithstanding the song of birds and the odour and hue of flowers, though the latter reflected the beauty of the poet's friend.

2 *Proud-pied.*—"Gorgeously variegated."—Schmidt.

4 *Heavy Saturn laugh'd*, &c.—Relaxing for the time his moroseness and melancholy.

7 *Any summer's story tell.*—Recount any gay story suited to the brightness of the season.

8 *Their proud lap.*—According to Schmidt (and no other view seems probable), "lap" here is to be understood of the place where the flowers grew.

10 *The deep vermilion.*—"Vermilion" is generally used now to denote a red different from that of the rose.

11, 12 They were but semblances of you both in form and sweetness. I played with them as reflecting your image.

XCIX.

The forward violet thus did I chide :—
Sweet thief, whence didst thou steal thy sweet that smells,
If not from my love's breath ? The purple pride
Which on thy soft cheek for complexion dwells,
In my love's veins thou hast too grossly dyed.
The lily I condemned for thy hand,
And buds of marjoram had stolen thy hair :
The roses fearfully on thorns did stand,
One blushing shame, another white despair ;
A third, nor red nor white, had stolen of both,
And to his robbery had annex'd thy breath ;
But for his theft, in pride of all his growth
A vengeful canker eat him up to death.
More flowers I noted, yet I none could see,
But sweet or colour it had stolen from thee.

XCIX. Enlarges further on what had been said in the last four lines of the preceding Sonnet.

This Sonnet, it should be observed, has fifteen lines.

1 *Forward.*—Early.

5 *Too grossly.*—Too manifestly.

6 Condemned for having taken its spotless white from thy hand.

7 *Buds of marjoram had stolen thy hair.*—Dowden supposes that Mr. W. H.'s hair was dark auburn, this making some approach to "dark urple-red," the colour of the buds of marjoram before they open.

8–10 The "fear," "shame," and "despair" are, of course, poetical consequences of the imaginary "theft."

C.

WHERE art thou, Muse, that thou forget'st so long
To speak of that which gives thee all thy might?
Spend'st thou thy fury on some worthless song,
Darkening thy power, to lend base subjects light? 4
Return, forgetful Muse, and straight redeem
In gentle numbers time so idly spent;
Sing to the ear that doth thy lays esteem,
And gives thy pen both skill and argument. 8
Rise, restive Muse, my love's sweet face survey,
If Time have any wrinkle graven there;
If any, be a satire to decay,
And make Time's spoils despised everywhere. 12
Give my love fame faster than Time wastes life;
So thou prevent'st his scythe and crooked knife. 14

C. There was probably an interval of some months between this and the last Sonnet; and very likely there had been no personal interview between the poet and his friend for a still longer period (lines 9, 10). The poet now calls upon his Muse to resume her strains, and, in defiance of Time, to celebrate the fame of his friend.

2 *Gives thee all thy might.*—Cf. lxxviii. 13. "Skill and argument" (line 8), that is both subject and skill to describe and celebrate.

3 *Thy fury.* — Cf. *Midsummer Night's Dream*, Act v. sc. 1, lines 12, 13,—

> "The poet's eye, in a fine frenzy rolling,
> Doth glance from heaven to earth, from earth to heaven," &c.

4 *Darkening thy power.*—Through the unworthiness of the subjects. There may be, as has been thought, allusion to dramas on which Shakespeare had been at work. But of course, if this is so, the language here used is that of compliment.

9 *Restive.*—Q. "resty." "Restive" may be taken here as equivalent to "uneasy," "in aimless motion," "wandering." Cf. "truant Muse," in the next Sonnet. Shakespeare's Muse had not been *at rest*, lines 3, 4.

11 *Be a satire to decay.*—Cause decay to be disregarded and contemned, by conferring eternal fame.

14 Anticipating his agency, and rendering it abortive. Time is here equipped with both scythe and sickle.

CI.

O TRUANT Muse, what shall be thy amends,
For thy neglect of truth in beauty dy'd?
Both truth and beauty on my love depends;
So dost thou too, and therein dignify'd.
Make answer, Muse: wilt thou not haply say,
'Truth needs no colour, with his colour fix'd;
Beauty no pencil, beauty's truth to lay;
But best is best, if never intermix'd?'
Because he needs no praise, wilt thou be dumb?
Excuse not silence so; for 't lies in thee
To make him much outlive a gilded tomb,
And to be prais'd of ages yet to be.
Then do thy office, Muse; I teach thee how
To make him seem long hence as he shows now.

CI. The Muse is rebuked for neglecting the poet's friend. But the answer is suggested that the friend needs no eulogy. Truth expresses herself in the colour of his countenance, and true beauty requires no pictorial embellishment. Description and adornment would vitiate and adulterate what is pre-eminently excellent. Still, the Muse must not decline the suggested task; for it is her privilege to confer long-enduring renown.

3 Mr. W. H. is the embodiment of both truth and beauty: he is the standard of both.

4 *And therein dignify'd.*—And therein thou (my Muse) art dignified.

6 *With his colour fix'd.*—His colour is the *embodiment* of truth.

7 Beauty speaks for itself, requiring the aid of no pencil to prove by painting the fact of its existence.

8 External praise or embellishment will be injurious.

CII.

My love is strengthen'd, though more weak in seeming ;
I love not less, though less the show appear ;
That love is merchandis'd, whose rich esteeming
The owner's tongue doth publish everywhere.
Our love was new, and then but in the spring,
When I was wont to greet it with my lays ;
As Philomel in summer's front doth sing,
And stops his pipe in growth of riper days :
Not that the summer is less pleasant now
Than when her mournful hymns did hush the night,
But that wild music burthens every bough,
And sweets grown common lose their dear delight.
Therefore, like her, I sometime hold my tongue,
Because I would not dull you with my song.

CII. The poet excuses his previous silence. Love has increased in strength, even though declarations and utterances of love have become fewer. Affection becomes vulgarised by too frequent protestations. Sonnets following each other in rapid succession were suitable at the commencement of the friendship, just as the nightingale fills the groves with her music on the approach of summer. And the poet had paused in his song, as she does when summer advances, not wishing to weary his friend.

3 *Merchandis'd.*—Is made common, passing from one to another. *Whose rich esteeming.*—The great value in which he holds it.

7 *In summer's front.*—In very early summer.

8 *His pipe.*—So Q., though in line 10 we have "her mournefull himns."

CIII.

Alack! what poverty my Muse brings forth,
That having such a scope to show her pride,
The argument, all bare, is of more worth
Than when it hath my added praise beside.
O blame me not if I no more can write!
Look in your glass, and there appears a face
That over-goes my blunt invention quite,
Dulling my lines, and doing me disgrace.
Were it not sinful then, striving to mend,
To mar the subject that before was well?
For to no other pass my verses tend,
Than of your graces and your gifts to tell;
And more, much more, than in my verse can sit,
Your own glass shows you, when you look in it.

CIII. In the previous Sonnet had been set forth the thought that poetical eulogy and embellishment can add nothing to perfect truth and beauty. They are to be regarded rather as injurious. The thought here presented is essentially the same. And the concluding lines furnish an excuse for the poet's previous silence.

1 *What poverty.*—What poor compositions.

2 *To show her pride.*—To display the powers in which she exults.

3 *The argument.*—The subject, *i.e.*, the excellences of Mr. W. H.

7 *Over-goes.*—Transcends. *Blunt.*—Dull and crass, unable to deal with a subject so exalted.

8 *Dulling my lines*, &c.—Through the conscious lack of adequate power.

9, 10 Malone quotes from *King Lear* (Act i. sc. 4, line 369),—"Striving to better, oft we mar what's well."

11 *To no other pass.*—To no other issue. The word here is probably figurative, the metaphor being perhaps derived from the pass in fencing.

13 *Sit.*—Be comprised.

✠✠✠

CIV.

To me, fair friend, you never can be old,
For as you were, when first your eye I ey'd,
Such seems your beauty still. Three winters cold
Have from the forest shook three summers' pride;
Three beauteous springs to yellow autumn turn'd,
In process of the seasons have I seen,
Three April perfumes in three hot Junes burn'd,
Since first I saw you fresh which yet are green.
Ah! yet doth beauty, like a dial hand,
Steal from his figure, and no pace perceiv'd;
So your sweet hue, which methinks still doth stand,
Hath motion, and mine eye may be deceived.
For fear of which, hear this, thou age unbred,
Ere you were born, was beauty's summer dead.

CIV. Before writing this Sonnet the poet had evidently again seen his friend. Three years had elapsed since the commencement of the acquaintance. That interval did not seem to have impaired in the least degree the beauty of the poet's friend. Still there must have been change, though unperceived. And under apprehension of such mutability the poet proclaims the pre-eminence of his friend's beauty to future generations.

1 *You never can be old.*—Since your beauty seems to me unchanging. Cf. cviii. 13, 14.

2 *Your eye I ey'd.*—"Eye," it would seem, must here be taken of the face generally. Cf. i. 5; ix. 8, and *Troilus and Cressida*, Act v. sc. 3, line 81,—"Look, how thou diest! look, how thine eye turns pale!"

3–7 A not improbable inference can be drawn from these lines as to the season of the year when Shakespeare made the acquaintance of Mr. W. H. It will be observed that the spring is mentioned twice, and from this fact it seems not unlikely that the first interview occurred in the earlier part of the year.

9, 10 *A dial hand* would seem to be the hand of a clock. *Steal* must be taken, apparently, as meaning "glide away," and "his figure" of any embodiment of beauty; so that the statement in these two lines would seem to be general, preparatory to the particular statement about Mr. W. H. in lines 11, 12. But there may be a play on the two senses of "figure," so that the figure on the dial is not lost sight of, even with regard to the gliding away of beauty. In lxxvii. the "dial's *shady* stealth" seems to point to a sun-dial.

11 *Sweet hue.*—Cf. xx. 7, and note.

CV.

Let not my love be called idolatry,
Nor my beloved as an idol show,
Since all alike my songs and praises be,
To one, of one, still such, and ever so.
Kind is my love to-day, to-morrow kind,
Still constant in a wondrous excellence ;
Therefore my verse to constancy confin'd,
One thing expressing, leaves out difference.
Fair, kind, and true, is all my argument,
Fair, kind, and true, varying to other words;
And in this change is my invention spent,
Three themes in one, which wondrous scope affords.
Fair, kind, and true, have often liv'd alone,
Which three, till now, never kept seat in one.

CV. The poet defends himself against the possible charge, that he idolised his friend, by ever repeating the same eulogies. He replies that he has a wide theme of discourse, since there is in his friend a threefold excellence, beauty, kindness, and truth, which never before were to be found united.

1 *Idolatry.*—Dowden quotes W. S. Walker,—"Because the continual repetition of the same praises seemed like a form of worship."

2 *As an idol show.*—As an idol exhibited to be worshipped.

8 *Leaves out difference,*—which, in the particulars referred to, is not supposed to exist.

9 *Argument.*—Subject, as frequently.

CVI.

When in the chronicle of wasted time
I see descriptions of the fairest wights,
And beauty making beautiful old rhyme,
In praise of ladies dead, and lovely knights,
Then in the blazon of sweet beauty's best,
Of hand, of foot, of lip, of eye, of brow,
I see their antique pen would have express'd
Even such a beauty as you master now.
So all their praises are but prophecies
Of this our time, all you prefiguring;
And, for they look'd but with divining eyes,
They had not skill enough your worth to sing:
For we, which now behold these present days,
Have eyes to wonder, but lack tongues to praise.

CVI. The poet, reviewing the history of the past, finds, in the descriptions therein contained of beauteous ladies and "lovely knights," types and partial prophetic adumbrations of the marvellous beauty of his friend; which is felt to surpass all praise. Cf. lix.

1 *Wasted time.*—Time expended and past.

2 *The fairest wights.*—The most beautiful persons.

3 Old poems still resplendent with the beauty celebrated therein, or blazoned forth.

8 *You master now.*—You now possess in completeness.

11 *Divining eyes.*—Eyes which could but dimly foresee the coming revelation of beauty in Mr. W. H.

12 *Skill.*—Q. "still."

CVII.

Not mine own fears, nor the prophetic soul
Of the wide world, dreaming on things to come,
Can yet the lease of my true love control,
Suppos'd as forfeit to a confin'd doom.
The mortal moon hath her eclipse endur'd,
And the sad augurs mock their own presage;
Incertainties now crown themselves assur'd,
And peace proclaims olives of endless age.
Now with the drops of this most balmy time
My love looks fresh, and Death to me subscribes,
Since spite of him I'll live in this poor rhyme,
While he insults o'er dull and speechless tribes.
And thou in this shalt find thy monument,
When tyrants' crests and tombs of brass are spent.

CVII. Just before, the poet had spoken of history as a prophecy of his friend. The idea of prophecy is continued, but it takes now a different turn and approximates to foreboding. Neither his own fears nor the general forebodings of mankind and the world-soul could have control over the love which bound him to his friend, even though this love should seem to have a limited term, like a lease about to be forfeited. Death itself is subject to the poet, whose privilege it is to confer immortality. Cf. Introd. p. 22.

1, 2 *The prophetic soul of the wide world, dreaming on things to come.*—With this passage, which is very important in relation to Shakespeare's theology, cf. *Richard III.*, Act ii. sc. 3, lines 41–44,—

> "Before the days of change still is it so;
> By a divine instinct men's minds mistrust
> Ensuing danger, as by proof we see
> The water swell before a boisterous storm."

Brierre de Boismont says, in his work *Des Hallucinations*, ed. 1862, p. 43,—"Il existe dans les masses populaires un instinct politique qui leur fait pressentir les catastrophes des sociétés, comme un instinct naturel annonce d'avance aux animaux l'approche des bouleversements physiques."

5 *The mortal moon.*—Taken by Massey and Minto, and with probable correctness, as denoting Queen Elizabeth; but the *eclipse* cannot be the Queen's death. The emphasis evidently lies on the word "endur'd," and it would rather seem, as pointed out by Dowden, that the moon has passed through her eclipse, and is again shining. With better reason, therefore, the reference may be supposed to be to the Rebellion of Essex.

6 *The sad augurs* will thus be those who had predicted the success of this attempt.

8 *Of endless age.*—With reference to the future.

9 *This most balmy time.*—Written probably on a mild spring or early summer day, with genial showers.

12 *Dull and speechless tribes.*—That is, of the common dead.

14 *Crests.*—Engraved on monumental tablets.

CVIII.

What's in the brain that ink may character,
Which hath not figur'd to thee my true spirit?
What's new to speak, what now to register,
That may express my love, or thy dear merit?
Nothing, sweet boy; but yet, like prayers divine,
I must each day say o'er the very same;
Counting no old thing old, thou mine, I thine,
Even as when first I hallow'd thy fair name.
So that eternal love in love's fresh case
Weighs not the dust and injury of age,
Nor gives to necessary wrinkles place,
But makes antiquity for aye his page;
Finding the first conceit of love there bred,
Where time and outward form would show it dead.

CVIII. In expressing his love to his friend the poet had already used all the ideas which thought could devise, and all the expressions which language could supply. But, notwithstanding the constant repetition, the poet must not cease from his strains. Love is eternal, knowing no change in the object beloved.

3 *What now to register.*—So Q., though "now" may possibly be a misprint for "new."

5 *Sweet boy.*—Notice the indication of youth, though the expression might be suitably employed of a young man of twenty-one, retaining his youthful freshness. *Like prayers divine.*—Like prayers to the Deity.

9 *In love's fresh case.*—Though a change may have occurred in the appearance of the beloved one, placing the lover consequently in "a fresh case," a new position.

10, 11 Love does not regard the injuries inflicted by age, or unavoidable wrinkles. These injuries are merely external, like dust on the surface.

12 *But makes antiquity for aye his page.*—Ever sets before him the appearance of the beloved one in that olden time when the attachment commenced.

13, 14 Though the beauty of the beloved person may be decayed, yet imagination conceives of it as it was at first. "The first conceit of love" is still produced, where, to the ordinary eye, the power to charm is gone.

CIX.

O, NEVER say that I was false of heart,
Though absence seem'd my flame to qualify!
As easy might I from myself depart,
As from my soul which in thy breast doth lie:
That is my home of love: if I have rang'd,
Like him that travels, I return again,
Just to the time, not with the time exchang'd,—
So that myself bring water for my stain.
Never believe, though in my nature reign'd
All frailties that besiege all kinds of blood,
That it could so preposterously be stain'd,
To leave for nothing all thy sum of good;
For nothing this wide universe I call,
Save thou, my rose; in it thou art my all.

CIX. Rumours had probably reached Mr. W. H. of acquaintance which the poet had formed or patronage which he had sought during the previous period of absence. And there appears to have been at the time some scandal circulating concerning the poet's conduct, the precise nature of which it may be impossible now to determine. The poet defends himself from the charge of unfaithfulness and inconstancy. And whatever might be his faults and frailties, none of them could withdraw his affections from his friend, in comparison with whom the whole universe besides seemed nothing.

2 *To qualify.*—To temper, to moderate, to abate, to soften.—SCHMIDT.

4 *Which in thy breast doth lie.*—Cf. xxiv., *al.*

6, 7 Like one returning from his travels at the destined time, himself constant and his affection unaltered.

8 I wash out my stain (my supposed inconstancy) by my return.

11, 12 The poet could not possibly contract a stain so deep and unnatural as would be implied in deserting Mr. W. H. with all his sum of excellences.

13, 14 Of course, it is unnecessary to comment on a eulogy so strained and inflated.

CX.

Alas! 'tis true, I have gone here and there,
And made myself a motley to the view,
Gor'd mine own thoughts, sold cheap what is most dear,
Made old offences of affections new.
Most true it is, that I have look'd on truth
Askance and strangely; but by all above,
These blenches gave my heart another youth,
And worse essays prov'd thee my best of love.
Now all is done; have what shall have no end:
Mine appetite I never more will grind
On newer proof, to try an older friend,
A God in love, to whom I am confin'd.
Then give me welcome, next my heaven the best,
Even to thy pure and most most loving breast.

CX. Continues the subject of the preceding Sonnet. The poet confesses that he had been in error, and that he had formed new acquaintance. But thus he had been led to prize still more highly his "older friend," Mr. W. H. The experience he thus had was sufficient, and he was determined never again to indulge in similar wandering.

1 *I have gone here and there.*—Alluding possibly to journeys undertaken in pursuit of his theatrical profession.

2 *And made myself a motley to the view.*—Whether Shakespeare had actually played the part of a fool or jester, a "motley" (cf. *As You Like It*, Act ii. sc. 7, line 12 *sqq.*), is perhaps doubtful. The word may be here used figuratively, in accord with what follows. Shakespeare may have "played the fool" by seeking new acquaintance.

3 *Gor'd mine own thoughts.*—Meaning probably "wounded my self-respect." *Sold cheap*, &c.—Made light of the love of my best friend.

4 *Made old offences of affections new.*—Dowden interprets, "Entered into new friendships and loves, which were transgressions against my old love." But "old offences" may possibly be "enduring offences."

5 *Truth* here may be pretty nearly equivalent to "virtue," though "fidelity" is a not improbable meaning.

6 *Askance and strangely.*—As having parted acquaintance therewith. Q. "Asconce and strangely."

7 *Blenches.*—Aberrations. Cf. "Sometimes you do blench from this to that," *Measure for Measure*, Act iv. sc. 5, line 3. *Gave my heart another youth.*—The reaction ensuing restored my former state of mind.

8 *Essays.*—Attempts at making new friends.

9 *What shall have no end.*—That is, my love for you.

10, 11 I will not repeat the experiment (however successful it may have been now) of trying an older friend, by "grinding my appetite" for his love through the failure of other attempts at love and friendship.

13 To the most welcome refuge of all, next to heaven.

CXI.

O, FOR my sake do you with Fortune chide,
The guilty goddess of my harmful deeds,
That did not better for my life provide,
Than public means, which publick manners breeds.
Thence comes it that my name receives a brand,
And almost thence my nature is subdu'd
To what it works in, like the dyer's hand:
Pity me then, and wish I were renew'd;
Whilst, like a willing patient, I will drink
Potions of eysell, 'gainst my strong infection;
No bitterness that I will bitter think,
Nor double penance, to correct correction.
Pity me then, dear friend, and I assure ye,
Even that your pity is enough to cure me.

CXI. The allusions in this Sonnet to Shakespeare's profession as an actor are not to be doubted. To this cause the poet attributes his errors. Poverty, compelling him to gain a livelihood by catering for public entertainment, was the source of his faults and of the scandal which they had occasioned. He would fain, at almost any cost, purify himself from the stain. He deserves to be pitied by his friend, rather than to be blamed.

1 *With.*—Q. "wish."

4 *Publick manners.*—Implying vulgar, low, and probably disreputable conduct.

8 *Renew'd.*—Thoroughly changed.

10 *Eysell.*—Vinegar, a well-known supposed disinfectant. But here the idea is of a medicine to arrest and neutralise disease and corruption within.

12 *To correct correction.*—To complete and perfect the correction of my conduct. Similarly we say, "To make assurance doubly sure."

14 Implying probably that the cause of offence, whatever it may have been, was superficial, and not deeply seated in Shakespeare's nature.

CXII.

Your love and pity doth the impression fill
Which vulgar scandal stamp'd upon my brow;
For what care I who calls me well or ill,
So you o'er-green my bad, my good allow?
You are my all-the-world, and I must strive
To know my shames and praises from your tongue;
None else to me, nor I to none alive,
That my steel'd sense or changes, right or wrong.
In so profound abysm I throw all care
Of other's voices, that my adder's sense
To critic and to flatterer stopped are.
Mark how with my neglect I do dispense:—
  You are so strongly in my purpose bred,
  That, all the world besides, methinks y' are dead.

CXII. The request which the poet had made for his friend's pity is supposed to have been complied with. Satisfied in this respect, he strongly asserts that he cares nothing what others may think or say concerning him.

1, 2 Showing how deeply the poet felt the scandal: it was as if he had been branded on the forehead.

4 *O'er-green my bad.*—Extenuate what is evil, kindly screening it as with leaves.

6 To recognise you as the only judge of my conduct.

8 *Steel'd.*—Hardened. *Or changes, right or wrong.*—"*Either* to what is right, or to what is wrong."—Steevens.

10 *My adder's sense.*—Alluding to the adder's alleged deafness.

13 *Bred* may be taken as implying incorporation; and thus the sense may be given, "My view of my own conduct is so thoroughly identified with your judgment; and my future course of action depends so exclusively on you."

14 The poet turns and addresses the world. Cf. civ. 13, 14. *Y' are* is equivalent to "you are."

CXIII.

Since I left you, mine eye is in my mind,
And that which governs me to go about
Doth part his function, and is partly blind,
Seems seeing, but effectually is out ;
For it no form delivers to the heart
Of bird, of flower, or shape, which it doth latch :
Of his quick objects hath the mind no part,
Nor his own vision holds what it doth catch ;
For if it see the rud'st or gentlest sight,
The most sweet favour, or deformed'st creature,
The mountain or the sea, the day or night,
The crow, or dove, it shapes them to your feature.
Incapable of more, replete with you,
My most true mind thus maketh mine untrue.

CXIII. The poet asserts that, even during the period of absence, his heart had been thoroughly with his friend, whom he had seen in everything and everywhere.

1 *Mine eye is in my mind.*—Cf. xlvii. 7, 8,—

> "Another time mine eye is my heart's guest,
> And in his thoughts of love doth share a part."

2, 3 My bodily eye is partly blind.

4 *Is out.*—Is out of order.

6 *Latch.*—Receive and hold. Q. has "lack," a reading apparently impracticable. Cf. *Macbeth*, Act iv. sc. 3, lines 193–195,—"Words that would be howl'd out in the desert air, where hearing should not latch them."

7 *His quick objects.*—Objects perceived as the eye quickly moves.

10 *The most sweet favour.*—The sweetest outward appearance. Cf. cxxv. 5.

14 *Mine untrue.*—A tempting emendation has been suggested—"mind untrue." But the sense required would rather seem to be that the mind makes the eyes untrue. It is not easy to suppose that "mine" was originally "m' eyen," equivalent to "my eyes," and pronounced as one syllable. It is perhaps, on the whole, best, even if this view be not quite unobjectionable, to take "untrue" as a substantive, and to take as the meaning that the poet's mind, true to his friend, causes his untruthfulness ; causes him to be untruthful to the actual objects around him. So Malone, who quotes *Measure for Measure* (Act ii. sc. 4, line 170),—

> "Say what you can, my false outweighs your true."

CXIV.

Or whether doth my mind, being crown'd with you,
Drink up the monarch's plague, this flattery?
Or whether shall I say mine eye saith true,
And that your love taught it this alchymy,
To make of monsters and things indigest,
Such cherubins as your sweet self resemble,
Creating every bad a perfect best,
As fast as objects to his beams assemble?
O, 'tis the first; 'tis flattery in my seeing,
And my great mind most kingly drinks it up:
Mine eye well knows what with his gust is 'greeing,
And to his palate doth prepare the cup:
If it be poison'd, 'tis the lesser sin
That mine eye loves it, and doth first begin.

CXIV. In the joy of reconciliation the poet imagines himself a monarch crowned with his friend's love. His eye, like a king's cup-bearer desiring to please his master and humour his taste, presents only the image of his friend. Cf. cxiii.

2 *This flattery.*—Thus deceiving itself, by fancying that to be real which is only an illusion, like a monarch drinking in the false flattery of his courtiers.

3 Shall I say that the cause is in the eye rather than in the mind? This question receives virtually an affirmative answer in line 9.

6 What is said in this line might suit very well a young man of only twenty or twenty-one, but would scarcely agree with a more fully developed manhood.

8 As fast as objects present themselves to view.

9 *'Tis the first.*—The mind, whose taste ("gust") the yee flatters, willingly receives the false image prepared by the eye.

10 Cf. line 1. The comparison with the king and his cup-bearer is still kept in view.

14 Still the eye is a willing agent, and, like a cup-bearer, tastes first.

CXV.

Those lines that I before have writ do lie,
Even those that said I could not love you dearer ;
Yet then my judgment knew no reason why
My most full flame should afterwards burn clearer.
But reckoning time, whose million'd accidents
Creep in 'twixt vows, and change decrees of kings,
Tan sacred beauty, blunt the sharp'st intents,
Divert strong minds to the course of altering things ;
Alas ! why, fearing of Time's tyranny,
Might I not then say, 'Now I love you best,'
When I was certain o'er incertainty,
Crowning the present, doubting of the rest ?
Love is a babe ; then might I not say so,
To give full growth to that which still doth grow.

CXV. The poet retracts what he had previously written to the effect that his love for his friend was then as intense as possible. His affection has now become stronger than ever.

5 *Reckoning time.*—Taking account of time as ever changing the aspect and course of things, dulling the strongest affection, &c. Schmidt justly connects the "reckoning" with the "fearing of time's tyranny" of line 9. *Million'd accidents.*—"Millionfold, innumerable."—Schmidt, *Lex.* The change of "million'd" to "million" would injure the line.

8 *Divert strong minds to the course of altering things.*—Firm resolutions are changed by a change of circumstances. Cf. the Player King's speech in *Hamlet*, Act iii. sc. 2, lines 210, 211—

> "This world is not for aye, nor 'tis not strange,
> That even our loves should with our fortunes change," &c. ;

and *Troilus and Cressida*, Act iv. sc. 5, end,—"Sweet love is food for Fortune's tooth."

11 *O'er incertainty.*—Presuming on the uncertainty of the future.

12 *Crowning the present.*—By pronouncing it best.

13 *Love is a babe.*—Having a babe's power of growth. The poet may have in view the common representations of Cupid as a child. *Might I not say so.*—I ought not to have said so.

14 *To give full growth.*—To suppose to be fully grown.

CXVI.

Let me not to the marriage of true minds
Admit impediments. Love is not love
Which alters when it alteration finds,
Or bends with the remover to remove :
O no ; it is an ever-fixed mark,
That looks on tempests, and is never shaken ;
It is the star to every wandering bark,
Whose worth's unknown, although his height be taken.
Love's not Time's fool, though rosy lips and cheeks
Within his bending sickle's compass come ;
Love alters not with his brief hours and weeks,
But bears it out even to the edge of doom.
If this be error, and upon me proved,
I never writ, nor no man ever loved.

CXVI. This Sonnet, which easily connects itself with that preceding, celebrates the unfailing constancy of true love.

2 *Impediments.*—The "impediments" here spoken of seem to be identical with the "altering things" of line 8 in the last Sonnet. The poet cannot admit that these really affect and weaken true love.

3 *When it alteration finds* in the loved object.

4 Or is affected by absence.

5–7 Love is like a lighthouse unshaken by the winds and waves, and with its light shining over the waters, like a star. Others suppose that the star is in the heavens.

8 *Height.*—This word, I suppose, still has in view the lighthouse. Dowden remarks, "*Height*, it should be observed, was used by Elizabethan writers in the sense of value, and the word may be used here in a double sense, *altitude* (of the star) and *value* (of love), 'love whose worth is unknown, however it may be valued.'"

9 *Love's not Time's fool.*—Love is not weakened or destroyed by the lapse of time (line 11). The "fool of Time" is that which Time can do what he pleases with. "Rosy lips and cheeks" come within his power, within reach of his curved sickle. Contrast 1 *Hen. IV.*, Act v. sc. 4, line 81,—"And thought's the slave of life, and life Time's fool."

12 *Bears it out.*—Endures. *The edge of doom* may be taken as meaning "the very end," whether of life or of the world, the day of doom.

13 *Upon me proved.*—Proved in my case by my ceasing to love.

13, 14 The description of love I have given is as true as that I have put my hand to paper to write, &c.

CXVII.

Accuse me thus ; that I have scanted all
Wherein I should your great deserts repay ;
Forgot upon your dearest love to call,
Whereto all bonds do tie me day by day ;
That I have frequent been with unknown minds;
And given to time your own dear-purchas'd right ;
That I have hoisted sail to all the winds
Which should transport me farthest from your sight.
Book both my wilfulness and errors down,
And on just proof, surmise accumulate,
Bring me within the level of your frown,
But shoot not at me in your wakened hate :
Since my appeal says, I did strive to prove
The constancy and virtue of your love.

CXVII. The poet admits that he had neglected to pay due regard to his friend, and had allowed new companions to engross too much of his attention. He is willing that his friend should consider his conduct as not without blame ; but he palliates the fault, by asserting that he wished to prove the reality and constancy of his friend's affection.

1 *That I have scanted all.*—That I have been negligent in all particulars, &c.

6 *Given to time,* according to Dowden, means, "given to society, to the world," or "given away to temporary occasion what is your property, and therefore an heirloom for eternity." But the emendation which Staunton suggests, "given to them," seems not improbable. *Your own dear purchas'd right.*—Though it is not pleasant to attach a material signification to these words, yet, taking into account what is recorded of Lord Pembroke's liberality towards men of genius, it seems not unlikely that there is an allusion to previous presents.

7 *Hoisted sail,* &c.—Availed myself of every occasion, &c.

9 *My wilfulness.*—My self-willed and unreasonable conduct, as alluded to in previous lines.

10 The meaning may be, "Add reasonable conjecture to what you can *prove.*"

11 *Within the level of your frown.*—Within the scope or reach of your frown. Malone compares,—

> "The harlot king
> Is quite beyond my arm : out of the blank
> And level of my brain" (*Winter's Tale,* Act ii. sc. 3, lines 4-6).

CXVIII.

Like as, to make our appetites more keen,
With eager compounds we our palate urge :
As, to prevent our maladies unseen,
We sicken to shun sickness, when we purge ;
Even so, being full of your ne'er-cloying sweetness,
To bitter sauces did I frame my feeding,
And, sick of welfare, found a kind of meetness
To be diseas'd, ere that there was true needing.
Thus policy in love, to anticipate
The ills that were not, grew to faults assured,
And brought to medicine a healthful state,
Which, rank of goodness, would by ill be cured.
But thence I learn, and find the lesson true,
Drugs poison him that so fell sick of you.

CXVIII. The poet had previously (cx.) spoken of "grinding his appetite" during the period of absence. He now changes the figure. He had been taking a tonic to sharpen his appetite, or a prophylactic medicine to prevent disease. But he had learned that the expedient he had resorted to was premature and unnecessary, and that the drugs he had employed—that is, the companions and pursuits which had engaged his time and attention—were, under the circumstances, poisonous.

2 *Eager.*—Sharp, acid. Cf. *Ham.*, Act i. sc. 5, line 69,—"And curd, like eager droppings into milk."

4 *Sicken to shun sickness.*—Make ourselves ill with drugs. So "To be diseas'd," line 8.

5 *Ne'er cloying.*—Repels the supposition that he had been really satiated with his friend's society. So, in the next line but one, "sick of *welfare*," and in line 8, "ere that there was *true* needing."

9, 10 The policy spoken of resulted in unquestionable faults, disorders of moral health.

11 And had recourse to medicine, though in a state of health.

12 *Rank of goodness* may be taken as equivalent to "sick of welfare" in line 7.

14 *That so fell sick.*—Being "full of your ne'er-cloying sweetness."

CXIX.

What potions have I drunk of Syren tears,
Distill'd from lymbecks foul as hell within,
Applying fears to hopes, and hopes to fears,
Still losing when I saw myself to win!
What wretched errors hath my heart committed,
Whilst it hath thought itself so blessed never!
How have mine eyes out of their spheres been fitted,
In the distraction of this madding fever!
O benefit of ill! now I find true
That better is by evil still made better;
And ruin'd love, when it is built anew,
Grows fairer than at first, more strong, far greater.
So I return rebuk'd to my content,
And gain by ills thrice more than I have spent.

CXIX. Manifestly in connection with what precedes. The poet, it would seem, had been deceived and ensnared by woman's tears. Entangled by such wiles, he had committed one error after another, and had proved the truth of his own words (cxxix.),—

> "Mad in pursuit, and in possession so;
> Had, having, and in quest to have, extreme;
> A bliss in proof,—and prov'd, a very woe;
> Before, a joy propos'd; behind, a dream."

The details alluded to seem hopelessly obscure; but it is probable that we are here brought close to the causes of the scandal to which cxii. and cxxi. relate. In the end the poet learned to prize more highly than ever before the love of his friend.

1 *Drunk.*—The tears had influenced him so thoroughly, that they had been, as it were, imbibed.

2 *Lymbecks.*—Alembics or stills. *Foul as hell within.*—Cf. what is said of the poet's dark mistress in the second series of Sonnets,—"In nothing art thou black, save in thy deeds" (cxxxi. 13); "Who art as black as hell, as dark as night" (cxlvii. 14).

3 Now letting fear give way to hope, and now hope to fear.

4 *Still losing,* &c.—Probably on account of the unworthiness of the objects won.

7 *Fitted.*—"Worked and vexed by paroxysms."—Schmidt. Comparison has been made of *Pericles,* Act ii. sc. 1, line 58, "If it be a day fits you," &c. But there appears to be in our passage the idea of strange surprises.

8 *This madding fever.*—Cf. "My love is as a fever," &c., and,—

> "Past cure I am, now reason is past cure,
> And frantic mad with evermore unrest," &c. (cxlvii.)

10 *That better,* &c.—The better love is manifestly the love to his friend.

13 *To my content.*—With a feeling of contentment and satisfaction.

CXX.

THAT you were once unkind, befriends me now,
And for that sorrow, which I then did feel,
Needs must I under my transgression bow,
Unless my nerves were brass or hammered steel.
For if you were by my unkindness shaken,
As I by yours, y' have pass'd a hell of time:
And I, a tyrant, have no leisure taken
To weigh how once I suffer'd in your crime.
O that our night of woe might have remembered
My deepest sense, how hard true sorrow hits,
And soon to you, as you to me then tendered
The humble salve which wounded bosoms fits!
But that your trespass now becomes a fee;
Mine ransoms yours and yours must ransom me.

CXX. The poet urges that the pain he had once suffered from his friend's conduct (cf. xl., &c.) should be taken into account with respect to the seeming want of regard which he had displayed during the period of separation. The one must be taken as a set-off against the other.

3 Thinking that I have now inflicted on you similar pain.

4 *Unless my nerves*, &c.—Unless I were destitute of feeling.

6 *Y' have pass'd a hell of time.*—Cf. "Though waiting so be hell" (lviii. 13); and *Lucrece*, 1287 and 1288:—

> "And that deep torture may be call'd a Hell,
> When more is felt than one hath power to tell."

7, 8 *And I a tyrant*, &c.—I, like a tyrant, have been regardless of the pain I inflicted, not even sparing time to think of the suffering I once endured.

9, 10 *Our night of woe.*—On that former occasion. The expression "night of woe" may be metaphorical, though it is, of course, possible that reference may be made to some particular night. *Might have remembered my deepest sense.*—Might have caused my deepest sense to remember.

11 And that I had soon tendered to you, as you tendered to me on that former occasion.

12 *The humble salve.*—The humble apology. *Fits.*—Suits.

13 That former trespass of yours against me has become something which I can offer as a payment and ransom for my own offence.

CXXI.

'Tis better to be vile, than vile esteemed,
When not to be receives reproach of being,
And the just pleasure lost, which is so deemed
Not by our feeling, but by others' seeing.
For why should others' false adulterate eyes
Give salutation to my sportive blood?
Or on my frailties why are frailer spies,
Which in their wills count bad what I think good?
No;—I am that I am; and they that level
At my abuses, reckon up their own:
I may be straight, though they themselves be bevel;
By their rank thoughts my deeds must not be shown;
Unless this general evil they maintain,—
All men are bad, and in their badness reign.

CXXI. Separated to some extent from what precedes and from what follows. The poet, deeply moved at the scandal circulated concerning him, asserts that an evil reputation is worse than actual vileness. He does not claim to be blameless, but he was traduced by persons worse than himself, who were therefore unfit to criticise and censure his conduct. But perhaps they would deny the existence of distinctions in guilt or immorality, asserting that all men are alike corrupt, exulting and triumphing in evil.

2 When he who is not vile incurs the reproach of being so.

3, 4 *And the just pleasure,*—that is, of self-respect or of an approving conscience. *Which is so deemed* looks back to what had been said in lines 1 and 2: "When the character which is not vile is so deemed, looked at by the eyes of others; though all the time our own conscience tells us that we are misjudged, and that we are not really vile."

5 *Adulterate.*—Equivalent to "adulterous." Or in a more general sense, as "And bastards of his foul adulterate heart" (*Lover's Complaint*, line 175).

6 Take account of and criticise what my somewhat warm nature may do in gay or less restrained moments.

8 *In their wills.*—These words may be equivalent not merely to "in their minds," but with the added notion "in accordance with their wishes"—"they would like to make me out bad."

9 *No;—I am that I am.*—With all my frailties, but yet not without something of good. *Level.*—So as to take aim. Cf. cxvii. 11.

11 They should not think that because they diverge from the straight line (of rectitude) I must necessarily do the same.

13 *Their rank thoughts.*—This, as well as preceding expressions, shows that the charge brought against the poet involved sensuality in some form or other.

CXXII.

Thy gift, thy tables, are within my brain
Full character'd with lasting memory,
Which shall above that idle rank remain,
Beyond all date, even to eternity :
Or at the least so long as brain and heart
Have faculty by nature to subsist ;
Till each to ras'd oblivion yield his part
Of thee, thy record never can be miss'd.
That poor retention could not so much hold,
Nor need I tallies, thy dear love to score ;
Therefore to give them from me was I bold,
To trust those tables that receive thee more ;
To keep an adjunct to remember thee,
Were to import forgetfulness in me.

CXXII. The poet had received from his friend tablets for the registry of memoranda. This present the poet had, probably during the period of separation, given away to some other person—perhaps after writing xcix., thinking that the breach was final. The friend seems to have heard that the "tables" had been thus given away. Shakespeare now defends his conduct. To have kept the "tables" would have implied that he could not trust his memory. They were superfluous. The record of his friend was on the tables of the heart, written in characters never to be effaced.

1 The record of thee, instead of being written on the tables, is within my brain.

3 *That idle rank.*—"That poor dignity (of tables written upon with pen or pencil)."—Dowden.

9 *That poor retention.*—That imperfect way of keeping facts in memory, and of recording deep affection.

10 *Tallies.*—Schmidt explains the word tally as "a stick on which notches or scores are cut to keep accounts by," and he refers in illustration to *Henry VI.*, Second Part, Act iv. sc. 7, line 39,—"Our forefathers had no other books but the score and the tally."

CXXIII.

No ! Time, thou shalt not boast that I do change :
Thy pyramids built up with newer might
To me are nothing novel, nothing strange ;
They are but dressings of a former sight.
Our dates are brief, and therefore we admire
What thou dost foist upon us that is old ;
And rather make them born to our desire,
Than think that we before have heard them told.
Thy registers and thee I both defy,
Not wondering at the present nor the past ;
For thy records and what we see do lie,
Made more or less by thy continual haste :
This I do vow, and this shall ever be,
I will be true, despite thy scythe and thee :

CXXIII. In this Sonnet, which is probably to be connected with that next before, the poet reverts to the doctrine which had appeared previously, in lix., that there is nothing new, but that all things recur in unending succession. Things grand and stupendous which seem to be new are not really such. They are but re-presentations, dressings-up again, of what we have seen before, though the sight may have passed from our memory, and though there may be no historical record. The power of Time, thus limited to bringing back again what is old, the poet defies.

2 *Thy pyramids.*—To be understood of anything grand and stupendous. *Newer might.*—Power lately exercised.

5 *Dates.*—Terms of existence. *Admire.*—Wonder at.

7 *And rather make them born to our desire.*—And prefer to regard them as really new, just "born." Q. "borne."

11 *What we see do lie.*—By pretending to be new when not really so.

12 *Made more or less by thy continual haste.*—Thus preventing an accurate register from being kept.

14 *Scythe.*—Q. "syeth."

CXXIV.

If my dear love were but the child of state,
It might for Fortune's bastard be unfather'd,
As subject to Time's love, or to Time's hate,
Weeds among weeds, or flowers with flowers gather'd.
No ; it was builded far from accident ;
It suffers not in smiling pomp, nor falls
Under the blow of thralled discontent,
Whereto the inviting time our fashion calls :
It fears not policy, that heretick,
Which works on leases of short-numbered hours,
But all alone stands hugely politick,
That it nor grows with heat, nor drowns with showers.
To this I witness call the fools of Time,
Which die for goodness, who have liv'd for crime.

CXXIV. Apparently in continuation. The poet declares that his love for his friend is not subject to the mutations which attend courtiers and state affairs. It was not the result of accident or policy ; and it fears not the scythe of Time.

1, 2 If my love were the child of state, it might have yielded up its position in relation to the state to whatever Fortune, in her endless changes, might produce.

3 *As subject to Time's love or to Time's hate.*—That is, as being the "fool of Time" (line 13).

4 To be cut down by the scythe of Time at his pleasure, and accordingly, as hated or loved, to lie a weed among weeds, or a flower among flowers.

5 *No ; it was builded,* &c.—Reverting probably to the pyramid spoken of in the last Sonnet.

6 *Smiling pomp.*—Notice that the idea of "state" is still kept in view.

7 *Under the blow of thralled discontent.* Alluding pretty evidently to the discontent existing after the death of Essex. The discontent was "thralled," as being kept down and held in subjection.

8 The custom and usage of our time invites to such discontent.

9 *That heretick.*—As seeking separately its own interests.

11, 12 *But all alone,* &c.—Here again we have the pyramid of the last Sonnet. *Politick* seems here equivalent to self-sufficing, desiring no increase or extension, and fearing no enemies, like a well-ordered city or state. Cf. *Much Ado,* Act v. sc. 2, lines 63, 64,—"So politic a state of evil that they will not admit any good part to intermingle with them."

13, 14 *The fools of Time,* &c.—Those whom Time does what he likes with. They "die for goodness," alluding to the popular repute of Essex as the "good Earl," notwithstanding the "crimes" for which he and certain of his companions were executed. Cf. cxvi. 9.

CXXV.

Were 't aught to me I bore the canopy,
With my extern the outward honouring,
Or laid great bases for eternity,
Which proves more short than waste or ruining;
Have I not seen dwellers on form and favour
Lose all, and more, by paying too much rent,
For compound sweet foregoing simple savour,
Pitiful thrivers, in their gazing spent?
No;—let me be obsequious in thy heart,
And take thou my oblation, poor but free,
Which is not mix'd with seconds, knows no art,
But mutual render, only me for thee.
Hence, thou suborn'd informer! a true soul,
When most impeach'd, stands least in thy control.

CXXV. Closely connected with what goes before. The poet, who has still in view affairs of "state," speaks of himself as having borne a "canopy," and as having laid great bases for an "eternity" which had turned out to be of the briefest duration. But the services referred to had been purely external, outside "gazing;" as contrasted with that devotion of heart which he now offers to his friend. The Sonnets generally from c. to cxxvi. may be regarded as an apology or defence of the poet's conduct; but this comes out clearly in the conclusion of the one before us. Cf. Introd. p. 32.

1 *Were 't aught to me.*—As if to say, "If it were necessary for me to defend my conduct."

1–4 It is natural to regard as figurative the "bearing the canopy." Such must be the case with the "laying great bases for eternity;" and taking the last lines of the preceding Sonnet as referring to Essex and his companions, it is not unreasonable to suppose that there is here an allusion to Shakespeare's relations with Southampton. We may thus conclude that the poet asserts his relation to that nobleman to have been a "bearing the canopy," an "outward honouring," a "gazing" on his "extern," and that he had never been admitted to close and intimate friendship. The charge of fickleness and falsity of heart is thus answered.

3 *Or laid great bases,* &c.—There is probably still some thought of a pyramid in the poet's mind. The reference is probably to the Dedication to the *Lucrece*,—"The love I dedicate to your Lordship is without end," &c. But there may be allusion also to the *Venus and Adonis*.

[4] *Proves.*—So Q. Notice that it is the anticipated "eternity" which "proves more short" than ruin and destruction.

[5, 6] Persons admitted only to external relations, however sedulous in their attentions, may lose not only seeming affection, but incur still further mischiefs.

[7] The *compound sweet* alludes to external relations and formal etiquette; the "simple savour" to close intimacy and heartfelt love.

[8] *Pitiful thrivers*, even when successful.

[9] *In thy heart.*—Not "to thy heart," which would have been more distant. Schmidt explains "obsequious" by zealous, officious, devoted.

[10] *Take thou my oblation*, as represented by these Sonnets.

[11] *Which is not mix'd with seconds.*—Which is all as of the finest, best flour, in accordance perhaps with "oblation."

[12] *But mutual render, only me for thee.*—Alluding probably to the fiction of an exchange of hearts (xxii., xxiv.); so that the manifestation of love which the friend might show came from the poet's heart in the friend's breast, and *vice versâ*.

[13] *Hence, thou suborn'd informer.*—With reference probably to the person or persons who had brought charges against the poet.

[14] *Stands least in thy control.*—Such impeachment causing its love to be stronger, and its constancy more assured.

CXXVI.

O thou, my lovely boy, who in thy power
Dost hold Time's fickle glass, his sickle hour;
Who hast by waning grown, and therein show'st
Thy lovers withering, as thy sweet self grow'st!
If Nature, sovereign mistress over wrack,
As thou goest onwards, still will pluck thee back,
She keeps thee to this purpose, that her skill
May Time disgrace, and wretched minutes kill.
Yet fear her, O thou minion of her pleasure;
She may detain, but not still keep her treasure:
Her audit, though delay'd, answer'd must be,
And her quietus is to render thee.

CXXVI. This Sonnet may probably have been designed, not merely as an *Envoy* to the Sonnets next preceding, or to Sonnets c. to cxxv., but as a conclusion to the whole of the first series. The poet's friend is warned that though Nature has hitherto preserved his beauty, and successfully resisted Time and Decay, yet that she has but a limited power, and that she must by-and-by inevitably surrender.

[1] *My lovely boy.*—It appears thus implied that Mr. W. H. is still a youth.

[2] *Time's fickle glass.*—Time's ever-shifting and changing hour-glass. *His sickle hour.*—His hour which, like a sickle, cuts off all things beautiful. There is, of course, an allusion to the scythe or sickle with which the figure of Time is represented as armed.

[3] *Who hast by waning grown.*—Whose change with the advance of time has been a growth in beauty.

[4] *Thy lovers withering.*—As men commonly decay with advancing age.

[5] *Wrack.*—Decay.

[6] *Pluck thee back.*—Pull and keep thee back, so as to be still in youthful beauty.

[8] *May Time disgrace.*—His agency being thwarted, and his efforts rendered ineffectual. *Wretched minutes kill.*—The "minutes" are killed or annihilated, as leaving behind them no trace of their existence.

[9] *Yet fear her.*—Do not place assured confidence in her, that is, in Nature.

[10] *Not still keep.*—Not keep continually.

[11] She must render her account at last.

[12] *Quietus* has been taken as a technical legal term, implying an acquittance or discharge of obligation. As this Sonnet has twelve lines only, the printer of the Quarto seems to have thought that two lines were lacking, and accordingly placed at the end marks of parenthesis thus:—

( )
( )

CXXVII.

In the old age black was not counted fair,
Or if it were, it bore not beauty's name ;
But now is black beauty's successive heir,
And beauty slander'd with a bastard shame :
For since each hand hath put on Nature's power,
Fairing the foul with Art's false borrow'd face,
Sweet beauty hath no name, no holy bower,
But is profan'd, if not lives in disgrace.
Therefore my mistress' eyes are raven black,
Her eyes so suited ; and they mourners seem
At such, who not born fair, no beauty lack,
Slandering creation with a false esteem :
Yet so they mourn, becoming of their woe,
That every tongue says, beauty should look so.

CXXVII. This Sonnet is the first of the second series, a series concerned mainly with the poet's dark mistress. The Sonnet treats of the degeneracy of the times with regard to beauty. Black hair and a dark complexion were not formerly considered beautiful. And, besides, artificial beauty had usurped the place of Nature. It was suitable, therefore, after all, that the eyes of the poet's mistress should be black, as mourning over such a state of things ; and they make black itself beautiful. This Sonnet should be compared with the passage in *Love's Labour's Lost*, Act iv. sc. 3, beginning, "Is ebony like her? O wood divine."

Compare also Sidney's *Astrophel and Stella* (vii.):—

> "When Nature made her chiefe worke, Stella's eyes,
> In colour blacke why wrapt she beames so bright?
> . . . . . .
> That whereas blacke seemes Beauties contrary,
> She even in blacke doth make all beauties flow?
> . . . . . She minding Love should be
> Placed ever there gave him this mourning weede
> To honor all their deathes who for her bleed."

3 *Beauty's successive heir.*—Has gained the esteem formerly devoted to beauty. The "successive heir" is the heir who succeeds, and obtains the inheritance.

4 *And beauty slander'd with a bastard shame.*—The "bastard shame" is the product of art. Beauty and Nature are slandered by the artificial asserting in effect that Art is better than Nature.

5 *Hath put on Nature's power.*—It being Nature's prerogative to give beauty.

7 Natural beauty has no exclusive name, no sanctuary all her own. Q., "no holy boure."

10 *Suited.*—The sense of "clothed" which has been given to the word here is questionable.

12 *Slandering creation*, &c.—See on line 4.

CXXVIII.

How oft, when thou, my music, music play'st,
Upon that blessed wood whose motion sounds
With thy sweet fingers, when thou gently sway'st
The wiry concord that mine ear confounds,
Do I envy those jacks, that nimble leap
To kiss the tender inward of thy hand,
Whilst my poor lips, which should that harvest reap,
At the wood's boldness by thee blushing stand!
To be so tickled, they would change their state
And situation with those dancing chips,
O'er whom thy fingers walk with gentle gait,
Making dead wood more bless'd than living lips.
Since saucy jacks so happy are in this,
Give them thy fingers, me thy lips to kiss.

CXXVIII. The poet's mistress was skilled in playing on the virginal. He at first envies the jacks of the instrument, as he sees them move touched by her hands; but at last he expresses his willingness that they should kiss her fingers; it is for him, as her lover, to kiss her lips.

1 *My music* must be taken to mean "as charming to me as music," for it appears from cxxx. and cxli. that her voice was not very pleasing to the poet's ears.

3, 4 *Sway'st the wiry concord*, &c.—Controllest the harmony proceeding from the wires, a harmony which holds me spell-bound.

5 *Jacks.*—Corresponding, though not in technical detail, with the keys of the pianoforte.

6 *Tender inward of thy hand.*—Notice this indication of higher rank and exemption from manual toil.

11 *Thy.*—Q. "their." *Gait.*—Q. "gate."

14 *Thy fingers.*—Q. "their fingers."

CXXIX.

THE expense of spirit in a waste of shame
Is lust in action; and till action, lust
Is perjur'd, murd'rous, bloody, full of blame,
Savage, extreme, rude, cruel, not to trust;
Enjoy'd no sooner, but despised straight;
Past reason hunted; and no sooner had,
Past reason hated, as a swallowed bait,
On purpose laid to make the taker mad:
Mad in pursuit, and in possession so;
Had, having, and in quest to have, extreme;
A bliss in proof,—and prov'd, a very woe;
Before, a joy propos'd; behind, a dream;
All this the world well knows; yet none knows well
To shun the heaven that leads men to this hell.

CXXIX. The subject of this Sonnet is sexual passion, a subject treated in a pessimistic manner. With eager and ungovernable recklessness lust pursues an object which, when attained, becomes "a dream," "a very woe." Yet the passion has such supremacy over mankind that none can resist its influence, however well it may be known that the object pursued is not merely a worthless nothing, but even a deadly mischief. The matter of this Sonnet answers even in several details to the "Allegory" painted by Bronzino, now in the National Gallery.

1, 2 *Lust in action* is a wasteful and shameful expenditure of vital energy. Cf. "It hath been observed by the ancients that much use of Venus doth dim the sight. . . . The cause of dimness of sight . . . is the expence of spirits," Bacon, *Nat. Hist.;* Spedding's *Bacon,* vol. ii. pp. 555, 556.

8 *Mad.*—Q. has "made."

11 *Prov'd, a.*—Q. has "proud and."

12 *A dream.*—*Lucrece,* 211, 212, should be compared:—

> "What win I, if I gain the thing I seek?
> A dream, a breath, a froth of fleeting joy."

11–14 With reference to these lines, Mr. Shaw has directed my attention to the following passage in Lodge's *Euphues Golden Legacie* (1590):—

> "Ah, Lorrell, lad, what makes thee Herry loue?
> A sugred harme, a poyson full of pleasure,
> A painted shrine, ful-fild with rotten treasure,
> A heaven in shew, a hell to them that proue."

CXXX.

My mistress' eyes are nothing like the sun ;
Coral is far more red than her lips red :
If snow be white, why then her breasts are dun ;
If hairs be wires, black wires grow on her head.
I have seen roses damask'd, red and white,
But no such roses see I in her cheeks ;
And in some perfumes is there more delight
Than in the breath that from my mistress reeks.
I love to hear her speak, yet well I know
That music hath a far more pleasing sound ;
I grant I never saw a goddess go,—
My mistress, when she walks, treads on the ground ;
And yet, by heaven, I think my love as rare
As any she bely'd with false compare.

CXXX. Though the poet knows that his mistress is deficient in the several particulars which make up beauty and attractiveness, yet still he thinks her unsurpassed by any woman, however extolled.

2 *Coral.*—Q. "Currall."

5 *Roses damask'd.*—Damask roses are roses in which red and white are intermingled. As to the form "damask'd," compare "million'd," CXV. 5.

14 *Any she bely'd with false compare.*—Any woman in praising whose beauty the poets have used false and extravagant similes. Cf. XXI.

CXXXI.

Thou art as tyrannous, so as thou art,
As those whose beauties proudly make them cruel ;
For well thou know'st to my dear doting heart
Thou art the fairest and most precious jewel.
Yet, in good faith, some say that thee behold,
Thy face hath not the power to make love groan :
To say they err, I dare not be so bold,
Although I swear it to myself alone.
And, to be sure that is not false I swear,
A thousand groans, but thinking on thy face,
One on another's neck, do witness bear
Thy black is fairest in my judgment's place.
In nothing art thou black, save in thy deeds,
And thence this slander, as I think, proceeds.

CXXXI. The poet's mistress is as proud as though she were really beautiful. Others, indeed, decry her charms ; but when they deny her beauty they must be looking at her conduct, which is indeed black. So far as the poet is concerned, the strength of his passion proclaims his estimate of her beauty.

6 *Thy face hath not the power to make love groan.*—The poet's "thousand groans" (line 10) afford an answer, though, according to ordinary standards of beauty, he could not say that they are wrong (line 7) who make the assertion.

13 *In nothing art thou black, save in thy deeds.*—Cf. cxlvii. 14, "Who art as black as hell, as dark as night ;" and cxliv. 4, "The worser spirit a woman colour'd ill," &c.

CXXXII.

THINE eyes I love, and they, as pitying me,
Knowing thy heart torments me with disdain,
Have put on black, and loving mourners be,
Looking with pretty ruth upon my pain.
And truly not the morning sun of heaven
Better becomes the grey cheeks of the east,
Nor that full star that ushers in the even,
Doth half that glory to the sober west,
As those two mourning eyes become thy face:
O, let it then as well beseem thy heart
To mourn for me, since mourning doth thee grace,
And suit thy pity like in every part.
Then will I swear beauty her self is black,
And all they foul that thy complexion lack.

CXXXII. It was his mistress's eyes which fascinated the poet, though they were black; and he fancies that their blackness betokened pity for the torments he suffered from her pride and disdain. And so becoming did they seem in her face that neither morning sun nor evening star was so beautiful; and they made her face itself the type of beauty.

2 *Torments.*—Q. has "torment;" but to make the eyes torment is opposed to the general sense and aim of the Sonnet.

4 *Ruth.*—Pity.

9 *Mourning eyes.*—Q. has "morning eyes."

12 *Suit thy pity like in every part.*—"Suit" must here be taken in the sense of "dress," "attire." And the meaning would appear to be, "Let every part of thee, and not merely thy eyes, pity me, and let every part wear a similar garb of mourning."

CXXXIII.

BESHREW that heart that makes my heart to groan
For that deep wound it gives my friend and me!
Is't not enough to torture me alone,
But slave to slavery my sweet'st friend must be?
Me from myself thy cruel eye hath taken,
And my next self thou harder hast engross'd;
Of him, myself, and thee, I am forsaken;
A torment thrice threefold thus to be cross'd.
Prison my heart in thy steel bosom's ward,
But then my friend's heart let my poor heart bail;
Whoe'er keeps me, let my heart be his guard;
Thou canst not then use rigour in my jail:
And yet thou wilt; for I, being pent in thee,
Perforce am thine, and all that is in me.

CXXXIII. The poet complains that his mistress has enslaved, not only himself, but also his friend, by her charms. He is unable to escape from the enthralment, and cannot bail out his friend. At the same time, he is forsaken by his friend, his mistress, and himself. Cf. xl., cxliv. *et al.*

1 *Beshrew.*—"Originally a mild, indeed very mild, form of imprecation."—SCHMIDT.

5 *Thy cruel eye.*—Cf. cxxxii. 1.

6 And thou hast taken even a fuller possession of my friend.

9 To the poet, who could not escape from the fascinations of his mistress, her heart and bosom were like a prison with bars of steel.

11 *Whoe'er keeps me,* &c.—Wherever I may be imprisoned, whether in "thy steel bosom's ward" or elsewhere, let my heart be my friend's bail, and guard him from such durance.

12 Meaning possibly that rigorous treatment would be unsuitable in the case of one imprisoned as a bail or hostage for another.

14 *And all that is in me.*—Therefore thou hast my friend with whom I am united, xxxix. *et al.*

CXXXIV.

So now I have confess'd that he is thine,
And I myself am mortgag'd to thy will;
Myself I'll forfeit, so that other mine
Thou wilt restore, to be my comfort still:
But thou wilt not, nor he will not be free,
For thou art covetous, and he is kind;
He learn'd but, surety-like, to write for me,
Under that bond that him as fast doth bind.
The statute of thy beauty thou wilt take,
Thou usurer, that put'st forth all to use,
And sue a friend, came debtor for my sake;
So him I lose through my unkind abuse.
Him have I lost; thou hast both him and me;
He pays the whole, and yet I am not free.

CXXXIV. The subject treated of is still the same, that the poet's mistress has in her power both the poet and his friend. Here, however, language and imagery borrowed from legal transactions are more freely used; and it is the friend who had been surety for the poet. If the Sonnet is to be pressed, the friend had gone to the poet's mistress on business of the poet's.

3 *That other mine.*—That other myself.

9 *The statute of thy beauty thou wilt take.*—"*Statute* has here its legal signification, that of a security or obligation for money."—Malone. But the word is here used figuratively. This is, of course, obvious.

10 Dost exert all thy powers of fascination, like a usurer putting out all his property to interest.

11 Though coming to the lady as a representative of the poet, the friend is brought under her influence.

12 *Unkind abuse.*—In exposing him to the danger.

14 *He pays the whole.*—As being so completely held captive.

CXXXV.

Whoever hath her wish, thou hast thy *Will*,
And *Will* to boot, and *Will* in overplus ;
More than enough am I that vex thee still,
To thy sweet will making addition thus.
Wilt thou, whose will is large and spacious,
Not once vouchsafe to hide my will in thine ?
Shall will in others seem right gracious,
And in my will no fair acceptance shine ?
The sea, all water, yet receives rain still,
And in abundance addeth to his store ;
So thou, being rich in *Will*, add to thy *Will*
One will of mine, to make thy large *Will* more.
Let no unkind no fair beseechers kill ;
Think all but one, and me in that one *Will*.

CXXXV. The special characteristic of this Sonnet, as compared with those preceding, is the play on the word "Will." The dark lady has the "Will" of the poet's friend, meaning, no doubt, *William* Herbert. The poet asks that his "Will" (*William* Shakespeare) may be added, and that she will esteem as one her own will and the "Wills" of her two admirers. The Sonnet scarcely admits of further analysis.

An exceedingly interesting parallel to this and following Sonnets is found in the Dedication by John Davies to his "Select Second Husband for Sir Thomas Overbury's Wife, now a Matchless Widow" (1606). And it is specially appropriate as being addressed to "William Earle of Pembroke :"—

> "Wit and my *Will* (deere Lord) were late at strife,
> To whom this *Bridegroome* I for *grace* might send
> Who *Bride* was erst the happiest husbands wife
> That ere was haplesse in his *Friend*, and *End*.
> *Wit*, with it selfe, and with my *Will*, did warre,
> For *Will* (good-*Will*) desir'd it might be *YOU*.
> But *Wit* found fault with each particular
> It selfe had made ; sith *YOU* were *It* to view," &c.
> (From Grosart's *Chertsey Worthies' Library*).

Comparison may also be made of the lines commencing the Epigram addressed by Davies to Shakespeare :—

> "Some say, good *Will* (which I, in sport, do sing),
> Hadst thou not plaid some kingly parts in sport," &c.

1 *Will.*—In the printing of this word I here follow the Quarto. The word is, of course, used in a double sense, as an abbreviated personal name, and, also, of the lady's will as distinguished from her "wish."

2 Not only a sufficiency but a superfluity of "Will."

3, 4 The poet is the superfluity.

5 *Whose will is large and spacious.*—Whose desires are so ample.

7, 8 *Shall will in others,* &c.—It is doubtful whether in this and the next line "will" ought not to be taken as a name. "Shall will, in the case of others, seem quite acceptable, and not in respect of my will?"

12 *One will of mine.*—"Will" here may be taken as representing the poet's desire as well as his name.

13 Dowden suggests that this line should be printed,—

"Let no unkind 'No' fair beseechers kill."

I am inclined to accept this view, with the exception that "your" would seem preferable to "fair." But I have not ventured to introduce this emendation into the text.

CXXXVI.

If thy soul check thee that I come so near,
Swear to thy blind soul that I was thy *Will*,
And will, thy soul knows, is admitted there;
Thus far for love, my love-suit, sweet, fulfil.
Will will fulfil the treasure of thy love,
Ay, fill it full with wills, and my will one,
In things of great receipt with ease we prove
Among a number one is reckon'd none.
Then in the number let me pass untold,
Though in thy store's account I one must be;
For nothing hold me, so it please thee hold
That nothing me, a something sweet to thee:
Make but my name thy love, and love that still,
And then thou lov'st me,—for my name is *Will*.

CXXXVI. In connection with the last Sonnet, and still playing on the word "will." The poet sues for acceptance, and concludes by asking that his mistress will make his name her love, and so love him, his name being "Will."

1, 3 If any scruple should arise as to the nearness of access which I ask for, it may be overcome by admitting me as thy "Will," the word being, of course, used here in a twofold sense. The soul, where the will resides, is conceived of as "blind" and dark, being within the body and destitute of eyes.

5 *Fulfil.*—Fill up to the full. The first "Will" is, it would seem, to be taken in a complex sense, denoting all the "Wills" concerned.

6 *Ay, fill.*—Q. has "I fill," "I," as elsewhere, being equivalent to "Ay."

7 *Receipt.*—"Capacity, power of receiving and containing."—Schmidt.

8 One is of no account where a large number is concerned.

9, 10 Dowden observes, "Lines 9, 10, mean 'You need not count me when merely counting the *number* of those who hold you dear, but when estimating the *worth* of your possessions, you must have regard to me.' 'To set *store* by a thing or person' is a phrase connected with the meaning of 'store' in this passage."

11, 12 Make me of no account, if you will, but still love me, regard me as "a something sweet to thee."

13, 14 You love your other admirer named "Will." Love the name alone, and then you love me, for my name is *Will*.

CXXXVII.

THOU blind fool, Love, what dost thou to mine eyes,
That they behold, and see not what they see?
They know what beauty is, see where it lies,
Yet what the best is, take the worst to be. 4
If eyes, corrupt by over-partial looks,
Be anchor'd in the bay where all men ride,
Why of eyes' falsehood hast thou forged hooks,
Whereto the judgment of my heart is ty'd? 8
Why should my heart think that a several plot,
Which my heart knows the wide world's common place?
Or mine eyes seeing this, say this is not,
To put fair truth upon so foul a face? 12
In things right true my heart and eyes have erred,
And to this false plague are they now transferred. 14

CXXXVII. The poet complains that he is deceived by his eyes, so that he loves, as beautiful, a woman destitute of beauty and purity. His heart also has erred; and both heart and eyes are enthralled.

4 They take a face which, from deficiency of beauty, is "worst," to be "best," most beautiful.

5, 6 The poet's mistress is an impure woman, as appears from the figurative language of line 6. *Corrupt by over-partial looks.*—Wanting judicial fairness. *Anchor'd.*—Steevens compares,—

> "Whilst my intention (invention?), hearing not my tongue,
> Anchors on Isabel"
> (*Measure for Measure*, Act ii. sc. 4, lines 3, 4).

7, 8 The poet complains that his heart is held fast by the judgment of his misjudging eyes.

9 *A several plot* has been aptly explained as "an enclosed field," contrasting with "the wide world's common place" of line 10. The latter expression is equivalent to "the bay where all men ride." Cf. "Others, not affecting marriage at all, live, as they say, 'upon the Commons;' unto whom it is death to be put into the Several" (Peacham's *Worth of a Penny*, in Arber's *English Garner*, vol. vi., p. 261).

13 The "things right true" may be referred to the *true* character of the poet's mistress, about which there could be no mistake.

14 *False plague.*—Describing the baneful effect of the enthralment by that which had really no claim to be regarded as beautiful and attractive.

CXXXVIII.

When my love swears that she is made of truth,
I do believe her, though I know she lies;
That she might think me some untutor'd youth,
Unlearned in the world's false subtleties.
Thus vainly thinking that she thinks me young,
Although she knows my days are past the best,
Simply I credit her false-speaking tongue;
On both sides thus is simple truth suppress.
But wherefore says she not, she is unjust?
And wherefore say not I, that I am old?
O, love's best habit is in seeming trust.
And age in love loves not to have years told:
Therefore I lie with her, and she with me,
And in our faults by lies we flattered be.

CXXXVIII. The poet descants on the mutual untruthfulness of himself and his mistress, he desiring that she may think him young, and she, that he may think her faithful.

In the *Passionate Pilgrim*, dated 1599, this Sonnet is given with several variations:—

When my Loue sweares that she is made of truth,
I doe beleeue her (though I know she lies)
That she might thinke me some vntutor'd youth,
Vnskilfull in the worlds false forgeries.
Thus vainly thinking that she thinkes me young,
Although I know my yeares be past the best:
I smiling, credite her false speaking toung,
Outfacing faults in Loue, with loues ill rest.
But wherefore sayes my Loue that she is young?
And wherefore say not I, that I am old?
O, Loues best habite is a soothing toung,
And Age (in Loue) loues not to haue yeares told.
Therfore Ile lye with Loue, and Loue with me,
Since that our faults in Loue thus smother'd be.

As to the differences between the text of the Sonnet as thus given and that of the 1609 edition, see Introd., p. 81 note, and p. 135.

2 *I do believe her.*—Though with my heart, not with my intellect.

12 *To have.*—Q. "t' have."

CXXXIX.

O, CALL not me to justify the wrong,
That thy unkindness lays upon my heart;
Wound me not with thine eye, but with thy tongue
Use power with power, and slay me not by art.
Tell me thou lov'st elsewhere; but in my sight,
Dear heart, forbear to glance thine eye aside.
What need'st thou wound with cunning, when thy might
Is more than my o'erpress'd defence can 'bide?
Let me excuse thee: ah! my love well knows
Her pretty looks have been mine enemies;
And therefore from my face she turns my foes,
That they elsewhere might dart their injuries:
Yet do not so; but since I am near slain,
Kill me outright with looks, and rid my pain.

CXXXIX. The poet complains that, even in his presence, his mistress directs her regards towards other admirers. He would rather that she openly declared her preference for others. He cannot justify her conduct: still, he invents the excuse that she knows what injuries her looks have done him, and therefore directs her eyes elsewhere. But, whatever the consequences, he would rather that her looks were directed towards himself.

[3] *Wound me not with thine eye.*—That is, by directing it towards others.

[3, 4] *But with thy tongue,* &c.—Do not artfully glance aside, but use the power of thy tongue powerfully, and speak out frankly.

[8] *My o'erpressed defence,* &c.—My power of resistance is already overstrained.

**

CXL.

Be wise as thou art cruel ; do not press
My tongue-tied patience with too much disdain ;
Lest sorrow lend me words, and words express
The manner of my pity-wanting pain.
If I might teach thee wit, better it were,
Though not to love, yet, love, to tell me so
(As testy sick men, when their deaths be near,
No news but health from their physicians know ;)
For, if I should despair, I should grow mad,
And in my madness might speak ill of thee :
Now this ill-wresting world is grown so bad,
Mad slanderers by mad ears believed be.
That I may not be so, nor thou bely'd,
Bear thine eyes straight, though thy proud heart go wide.

CXL. The poet, still complaining that the eyes of his mistress glance aside, implores her not to try his patience too much.

2 *My tongue-tied patience.*—My patience hitherto silent.
4 *My pity-wanting pain.*—My pain on which you bestow no pity.
5, 6 If I might suggest such conduct as would be wise, it would be better, even if you do not love me, to tell me that you do.
8 *No news*, &c.—They are unwilling to hear of anything but recovery.
11 *Ill-wresting.*—Putting an evil construction on what is heard.
14 *Go wide* from fidelity, and in search of admirers.

CXLI.

In faith I do not love thee with mine eyes,
For they in thee a thousand errors note ;
But 'tis my heart that loves what they despise,
Who in despite of view is pleas'd to dote.
Nor are mine ears with thy tongue's tune delighted ;
Nor tender feeling, to base touches prone,
Nor taste nor smell, desire to be invited
To any sensual feast with thee alone :
But my five wits, nor my five senses can
Dissuade one foolish heart from serving thee,
Who leaves unsway'd the likeness of a man,
Thy proud heart's slave and vassal wretch to be :
Only my plague thus far I count my gain,
That she that makes me sin, awards me pain.

CXLI. Neither the senses nor the reason of the poet can find anything in his mistress worthy of love. Nevertheless his heart cannot be persuaded to abandon her. He consoles himself, however, with the thought that she is at once the cause of his sin and his suffering. Cf. cxxx.

4 *In despite of view.*—Although my eyes can see nothing attractive, yet my heart "dotes."

5 *Tongue's tune.*—Cf. cxxx. 9, 10.

6 *Base touches.*—Here equivalent to amorous, lascivious touches.

9 *My five wits.*—Malone here annotates, "'The wits,' Dr. Johnson observes, 'seem to have been reckoned five, by analogy to the five senses, or the five inlets of ideas. *Wit* in our author's time was the general term for the intellectual power.' From Stephen Hawes's poem called Graunde Amour and La Bell Pucel, 1554, ch. 24, it appears that the five wits were 'common wit, imagination, fantasy, estimation, and memory.'"

11, 12 The first of these lines is difficult. I cannot agree with Dowden's explanation, "My heart ceases to govern me, and so leaves me no better than the likeness of a man—a man without heart—in order that it may become slave to thy proud heart." Rather I should take the meaning to be, in accordance with what goes before, the poet is entirely governed by his heart, which still does not sway his five senses, &c., these constituting together "the likeness of a man," that is, a man *minus* the heart.

14 *Pain.*—This word implies, no doubt, that the suffering was right and fitting; but there seems no necessity to suppose that it has the special sense of "penalty."

CXLII.

Love is my sin, and thy dear virtue hate,
Hate of my sin, grounded on sinful loving:
O, but with mine compare thou thine own state,
And thou shalt find it merits not reproving;
Or, if it do, not from those lips of thine,
That have profan'd their scarlet ornaments,
And seal'd false bonds of love as oft as mine;
Robb'd others' beds' revenues of their rents.
Be it lawful I love thee, as thou lov'st those
Whom thine eyes woo as mine impórtune thee:
Root pity in thy heart, that when it grows,
Thy pity may deserve to pitied be.
If thou dost seek to have what thou dost hide,
By self-example may'st thou be deny'd!

CXLII. The poet protests against the reproofs of his mistress. If he merits reproof, it is not for her to reprove. She should rather pity him, if she expects to find pity for herself.

1 *Thy dear virtue.*—Thy cherished virtue. The lady, perhaps, is regarded as without virtue in the ordinary sense, and so hatred is called a "virtue."

2 *Hate of my sin.*—Hatred of my love; of me whose sin is "grounded" on loving thee. Cf. clii. 1.

7 *Seal'd false bonds of love.*—Malone gives several illustrative quotations, one of which may suffice to elucidate the meaning here, *Measure for Measure*, Act iv. sc. 1, lines 1–4,—

> "Take, O take those lips away,
> That so sweetly were forsworn,—
> But my kisses bring again,
> Seals of love, but seal'd in vain."

8 *Robb'd others' beds' revenues*, &c.—Implying, probably, that the lady had received the attentions of other *married* men.

9 Let it be lawful for me to love thee, &c. Cf. cxxxix.

13, 14 If thou seekest pity, while stifling it (supposing, indeed, that thou at all possessest pity), may your own example be followed, and may you find none!

CXLIII.

Lo, as a careful housewife runs to catch
One of her feathered creatures broke away,
Sets down her babe, and makes all swift despatch
In púrsuit of the thing she would have stay ;
Whilst her neglected child holds her in chace,
Cries to catch her whose busy care is bent
To follow that which flies before her face,
Not prizing her poor infant's discontent ;
So run'st thou after that which flies from thee,
Whilst I thy babe chase thee afar behind ;
But if thou catch thy hope, turn back to me,
And play the mother's part, kiss me, be kind :
  So will I pray that thou may'st have thy *Will*,
  If thou turn back, and my loud crying still.

CXLIII. Reverts to the subject of the *two* admirers of the dark lady. Here she is compared to a housewife pursuing a fowl, while her child is crying after her. The child represents the poet, and the fugitive bird, his friend. The poet asks that if his friend is caught, his own crying may not be disregarded. There seems no reason to doubt that the persons are altogether the same as in cxxxiv., cxxxv., xl., *al.*

8 *Not prizing.*—Not regarding.
9 *Run'st thou after.*—Cf. "when a woman woos," &c., xli. 7.
13 *Will.*—Meaning probably her purpose, and also William Herbert.

CXLIV.

Two loves I have of comfort and despair,
Which like two spirits do suggest me still;
The better angel is a man right fair,
The worser spirit a woman, colour'd ill.
To win me soon to hell, my female evil
Tempteth my better angel from my side,
And would corrupt my saint to be a devil,
Wooing his purity with her foul pride.
And whether that my angel be turn'd fiend,
Suspect I may, yet not directly tell;
But being both from me, both to each friend,
I guess one angel in another's hell.
Yet this shall I ne'er know, but live in doubt,
Till my bad angel fire my good one out.

CXLIV. The lady and the poet's male friend (whose beauty was celebrated in the first series of Sonnets) are the poet's "two loves," the one a good, the other an evil, angel. He suspects they are together, but cannot, for the present, ascertain the truth. This is the second Sonnet given in the *Passionate Pilgrim* with variations:—

TWo Loues I haue, of Comfort, and Despaire,
That like two Spirits, do suggest me still:
My better Angell is a Man (right faire)
My worser spirite a Woman (colour'd ill).
To winne me soone to hell, my Female euill
Tempteth my better Angell from my side,
And would corrupt my Saint to be a Diuell,
Wooing his purity with her faire pride.
And whether that my Angell be turnde feend,
Suspect I may (yet not directly tell:
For being both to me: both, to each friend,
I ghesse one Angell in anothers hell:
The truth I shall not know, but liue in doubt,
Till my bad Angell fire my good one out.

The change from "my" to "the" in line 3; from "faire" to "fowle" in 8; from "The truth I shall not know" to "Yet this shall I nere know," may possibly have proceeded from revision. In "from my side" of 6 the *Passionate Pilgrim* has probably preserved the true reading.

1 *Despair.*—As being hopelessly corrupt.

2 *Suggest.*—Insinuate temptation, tempt, as not infrequently in Shakespeare. Compare "To suggest thee from thy master," *All's Well that En s Well*, Act iv. sc. 5, line 47.

4 *The worser spirit*, &c.—As to the resemblance to Drayton's *Idea*, 22 (1599 ed.), see Introd., p. 38. Cf. *Love's Labour's Lost*, Act. i. sc. 2, lines 177, 178,—"Love is a devil: there is no evil angel but Love."

6 *Side.*—Q. has "sight."

9 *Fiend.*—Q. "finde."

CXLV.

Those lips that Love's own hand did make
Breath'd forth the sound that said, 'I hate,'
To me that languish'd for her sake :
But when she saw my woeful state,
Straight in her heart did mercy come,
Chiding that tongue, that ever sweet
Was us'd in giving gentle doom ;
And taught it thus anew to greet :
'I hate' she alter'd with an end
That follow'd it as gentle day
Doth follow night, who like a fiend
From heaven to hell is flown away.
'I hate,' from hate away she threw,
And sav'd my life, saying—'not you.'

CXLV. The poet had heard his mistress say, "I hate." When she saw the effect which this utterance produced, she consoled her lover by adding, "not you." This is the only Sonnet in the book written in eight-syllable metre. Dowden remarks that some critics, partly on this account, and "partly because the rhymes are ill-managed, reject it as not by Shakspere."

7 *Was us'd in giving gentle doom.*—Had been used in pronouncing the words previously mentioned, the "doom" of her lover.

8 *Greet.*—Schmidt explains "greet" here as meaning "to speak to me."

13 *I hate, from hate,* &c.—"I hate" ceased to import hatred, or to seem to do so.

CXLVI.

Poor soul, the centre of my sinful earth,
[Why feed'st] these rebel powers that thee array?
Why dost thou pine within, and suffer dearth,
Painting thy outward walls so costly gay?
Why so large cost, having so short a lease,
Dost thou upon thy fading mansion spend?
Shall worms, inheritors of this excess,
Eat up thy charge? Is this thy body's end?
Then, soul, live thou upon thy servant's loss,
And let that pine to aggravate thy store;
Buy terms divine in selling hours of dross;
Within be fed, without be rich no more:
So shalt thou feed on Death, that feeds on men,
And, Death once dead, there's no more dying then.

CXLVI. In this Sonnet, which apparently stands alone, the poet reflects on the folly of bestowing excessive care on the body, the soul's outer covering and ministering servant. In conclusion, he expresses the resolution to attain immortality, by nourishing the soul at the body's expense.

[1] *The centre of my sinful earth.*—The soul is here spoken of as a "centre," encompassed by "sinful earth." "Turn back, dull earth, and find thy centre out," *Romeo and Juliet*, Act ii. sc. 1, line 2, has been justly compared; but here "centre" has a somewhat different meaning.

[2] [*Why feed'st*].—"Feed'st" is used in i. 6. In Q. the first three lines of this Sonnet stand thus:—

> "Poore soule the center of my sinfull earth,
> My sinfull earth these rebbell powres that thee array,
> Why dost thou pine within and suffer dearth."

It is manifest that the second line as thus given is wrong, but how it is to be corrected is a matter concerning which the opinions of critics have very greatly varied. The general scope of the Sonnet must be taken into account. The principal subject is manifestly the feeding of the body and soul; and the conclusion come to is, that the latter, and not the former, is to be fed. The emendation, "Why feed'st," is thus suitable. Moreover, the "my" of the first line and the "why" commencing alike the second and third lines may have been the cause of confusion and error. Then, too, there is a verse of Southwell's "Content and Ritche" which Shakespeare may have had in view:—

"Spare diett is my fare,
My clothes more fitt than fine;
I knowe I feede and cloth a foe,
That pampred would repine"
(Grosart's Reprint in *Fuller Worthies' Library*, p. 74).

These rebel powers.—An excellently illustrative passage is to be found in *Lucrece*, lines 719–723, where the rebellion of Tarquin's fleshly lusts is spoken of:—

"His soul's fair temple is defac'd,
To whose weak ruins muster troops of cares
To ask the spotted princess how she fares.

She says, her subjects with foul insurrection
Have battered down her consecrated wall," &c.

Array.—Clothe, bedeck. The late Dr. Ingleby maintained "that 'array' in this Sonnet means *ill-treat* or *bring into evil condition*" (*Shakespeare: the Man and the Book*, Pt. I. p. 166). But the context seems to preclude this meaning here, whatever might be the possible sense of "array" in another connection.

4 *Painting*, &c.—A slight change of the metaphor involved in "array."

8 *Thy charge.*—What has cost thee so much. Cf. *Hamlet*, Act v. sc. 1, lines 99–101, "Did these bones cost no more the breeding but to play at loggats with 'em?" and Act iv. sc. 3, lines 23, 24, "We fat all creatures else to fat us, and we fat ourselves for maggots."

10 *To aggravate.*—To increase.

11 To be understood most probably of immortal renown, which is to be purchased by sacrificing a few years of life to intent study and enthusiastic literary work.

13, 14 Feeding on thy mortal body thou wilt feed on Death, and gain complete victory over him by a literary immortality.

CXLVII.

My love is as a fever, longing still
For that which longer nurseth the disease ;
Feeding on that which doth preserve the ill,
Th' uncertain sickly appetite to please.
My reason, the physician to my love,
Angry that his prescriptions are not kept,
Hath left me, and I desperate now approve
Desire is death, which physic did except.
Past cure I am, now Reason is past care,
And frantic mad with evermore unrest ;
My thoughts and my discourse as mad men's are,
At random from the truth vainly express'd ;
For I have sworn thee fair, and thought thee bright
Who art as black as hell, as dark as night.

CXLVII. The poet cannot subject his passion to the sway of reason. It has gained complete mastery over him; and his thoughts and words concerning his mistress fly far away from truth.

4 *My reason, the physician to my love.*—"Compare *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, Act ii. sc. 1, l. 5, 'Ask me no reason why I love you ; for though *Love* use *Reason* for his *physician* [so Farmer and most editors ; *precisian*, Folio], he admits him not for his Counsellor.'"

7, 8 *Now approve desire is death.*—Now recognise the truth that desire is death. *Except.*—"To object to, to protest against, to refuse."—SCHMIDT. The antecedent to "which" must be "desire," which had not kept the prescriptions of the physician Reason, refusing his physic.

9 *Past care.*—Hopelessly diseased, so that care is useless. Cf. *King Richard II.*, Act. ii. sc. 3, end, "Things past redress are now with me past care."

14 Cf. cxxxi. 12-14.

CXLVIII.

O me, what eyes hath Love put in my head,
Which have no correspondence with true sight!
Or, if they have, where is my judgment fled,
That censures falsely what they see aright?
If that be fair whereon my false eyes dote,
What means the world to say it is not so?
If it be not, then love doth well denote
Love's eye is not so true as all men's: no,
How can it? O how can Love's eye be true,
That is so vex'd with watching and with tears?
No marvel then though I mistake my view;
The sun itself sees not, till heaven clears.
O cunning Love! with tears thou keep'st me blind,
Lest eyes well seeing thy foul faults should find.

CXLVIII. The poet looks upon his mistress with the eyes of love, and so his view by no means corresponds with that of the world. Which sees truly? The poet concludes that the function of his eyes has become disordered by watching and by tears: the sun itself cannot see through rainy clouds.

4 *Censures falsely what they see aright.*—Draws false conclusions from the true image which the eyes have transmitted.

7, 8 *Love doth well denote Love's eye is not so true as all men's: no.*—The sense may be, that the fact of a man's being in love is sufficient evidence (sufficiently "denotes") that he cannot see aright. The colon before "no" is in Q.

13 *O cunning Love!*—"Love" here, it would seem, must be taken in the same sense as in the first line. There is manifestly some distinction between the "Love" here spoken of and the "Love" of lines 8, 9, whose eye is obstructed by tears.

CXLIX.

Canst thou, O cruel! say I love thee not,
When I, against myself, with thee partake?
Do I not think on thee, when I forgot
Am of myself, all tyrant, for thy sake?
Who hateth thee that I do call my friend?
On whom frown'st thou that I do fawn upon?
Nay, if thou low'rst on me, do I not spend
Revenge upon myself with present moan?
What merit do I in myself respect,
That is so proud thy service to despise,
When all my best doth worship thy defect,
Commanded by the motion of thine eyes?
But, love, hate on, for now I know thy mind;
Those that can see thou lov'st, and I am blind.

CXLIX. The poet's mistress questions his love for her. Against such doubts and insinuations he protests that he dotes upon her blindly; and he charges her with directing her loving regards towards those who can see, that is, can see her defects, and who, therefore, view her with indifference, or even display aversion.

2 *With thee partake.*—Take thy part.

3, 4 *When I forgot am of myself, all tyrant.*—When I think nothing of myself, am reckless of my own interests, and thus play the tyrant towards myself. Dowden, however, refers "all tyrant" to the lady:—"*All tyrant, i.e.*, thou complete tyrant;" but this seems harsh, though it might agree with the "cruel" of line 1. The view I have given appears preferable.

5–9 The poet not only renounces those who hate his mistress and those on whom she frowns; for an ill look from her causes him to be hostile to himself.

9, 10 The poet enforces submission on any feeling of pride within him which rebels against the service of the lady as an unworthy person.

11 *My best.*—My highest powers. *Defect.*—We now say "defects."

12 Cf. cxxxii. and cxxxix.

CL.

O, FROM what power hast thou this powerful might,
With insufficiency my heart to sway?
To make me give the lie to my true sight,
And swear that brightness doth not grace the day?
Whence hast thou this becoming of things ill,
That in the very refuse of thy deeds
There is such strength and warrantise of skill,
That in my mind, thy worst all best exceeds?
Who taught thee how to make me love thee more,
The more I hear and see just cause of hate?
O, though I love what others do abhor,
With others thou should'st not abhor my state;
If thy unworthiness rais'd love in me,
More worthy I to be belov'd of thee.

CL. The poet expresses his wonder that a woman so deficient in attractions can exert such a powerful sway over him. But the fact being so, there was the stronger reason why she should return his affection.

2 *With insufficiency.*—With defective attractions, or deficient in attractions.

4 Implying, If the day is bright and beautiful, *thou* certainly art not so.

5 How is it that thou makest plain and unsightly features and unworthy actions seem so becoming?

6 *The very refuse of thy deeds.*—The worst (line 8) of thy actions.

7 *Such strength and warrantise of skill.*—Such ability and evident cleverness. "Warrantise" has apparently passed to the sense of "evidence."

CLI.

Love is too young to know what conscience is ;
Yet who knows not, conscience is born of love ?
Then, gentle cheater, urge not my amiss,
Lest guilty of my faults thy sweet self prove.
For thou betraying me, I do betray
My nobler part to my gross body's treason ;
My soul doth tell my body that he may
Triumph in love ; flesh stays no farther reason,
But rising at thy name, doth point out thee
As his triumphant prize. Proud of this pride,
He is contented thy poor drudge to be,
To stand in thy affairs, fall by thy side.
No want of conscience hold it that I call
Her 'love,' for whose dear love I rise and fall.

CLI. A consciousness of where fault lies is apt to follow after love. There was danger, therefore, lest the poet's mistress should be incriminated as the cause of his bringing the nobler part of his nature under the dominion of his fleshly lusts. He asks, therefore, that the question as to the morality of his conduct shall not be raised.

1, 2 Love in its first impetuousness disregards moral considerations, but reflection and remorse follow on its fruition.

5, 6 *For thou betraying me*, &c.—The "gentle cheater" betrays or seduces the poet into sin ; and so he becomes guilty of treason against the nobler part of his nature.

9 *Thy name.*—See note on line 14.

10 *Pride.*—Proud conquest, alluding most likely to the lady's rank. In *his triumphant prize* there is probably an allusion also to the name "Fitton," *the fit one.*

14 *Rise and fall.*—Rise in the triumph of the flesh, and fall in the subjugation and humiliation of the soul. It has been thought that some lines in this Sonnet were expressed so that they might be taken *sensu male pudico ;* but whether this be so or not it is scarcely necessary to determine, though, as the lady was probably Mrs. Mary Fitton, it is not very difficult to suggest a possible play on the name in two ways. As to the possible play on "fit" compare *Cymbeline*, Act iv. sc. 1, "For 'tis said 'a woman's fitness comes by fits.'"

CLII.

In loving thee thou know'st I am forsworn,
But thou art twice forsworn ; to me love swearing,
In act thy bed-vow broke, and new faith torn,
In vowing new hate after new love bearing.
But why of two oaths' breach do I accuse thee,
When I break twenty ? I am perjur'd most ;
For all my vows are oaths but to misuse thee,
And all my honest faith in thee is lost :
For I have sworn deep oaths of thy deep kindness,
Oaths of thy love, thy truth, thy constancy ;
And, to enlighten thee, gave eyes to blindness,
Or made them swear against the thing they see ;
For I have sworn thee fair : more perjur'd I,
To swear, against the truth, so foul a lie !

CLII. The poet confesses that his attachment to his dark mistress convicts him of unfaithfulness. She, however, has been not only similarly unfaithful, but unfaithful anew to him. Still, he allows that he is the more untruthful; for, corrupt as she was, he had ascribed to her excellent virtues, and, in defiance of truth, had proclaimed her beautiful.

1 *Forsworn.*—As having been married long before.

3 *In act.*—In reality. This is a very important qualification with respect to Mrs. Fitton as the lady referred to. She may have alleged that she was *formally* and *legally* free from her youthful marriage, probably a runaway match, without the consent of her parents. The poet alleges that *in reality* she had broken her marriage-vow. According to modern usage, "in act" suggests another sense, which is here unsuitable, as the vow was broken *in act*, when swearing love to the poet. Cf. Introd., p. 88.

4 The "new hate" and "new love" are obviously towards the poet.

7 *To misuse thee.*—To treat you in a manner entirely different from that in which you ought to be treated.

8 *In thee is lost.*—As being incurably depraved.

10, 11 *Oaths of thy deep kindness*, &c.—Oaths that thou wast most kind, loving, and faithful.

11 *To enlighten thee.*—To shed lustre on thee.

12 *Them.*—Eyes, apparently.

13 *Perjur'd I.*—Q. has "perjurde eye."

CLIII.

Cupid laid by his brand, and fell asleep :
A maid of Dian's this advantage found,
And his love-kindling fire did quickly steep
In a cold valley-fountain of that ground ;
Which borrow'd from this holy fire of love
A dateless lively heat, still to endure ;
And grew a seething bath, which yet men prove
Against strange maladies a sovereign cure.
But at my mistress' eye Love's brand new-fired,
The boy for trial needs would touch my breast ;
I sick withal, the help of bath desired,
And thither hied, a sad distemper'd guest,
But found no cure ; the bath for my help lies
Where Cupid got new fire ; my mistress' eyes.

CLIII. This and the following Sonnet, placed as they are at the end, are best regarded, perhaps, as constituting a division by themselves. Both treat, though with some differences, of the same theme, that "Love's fire heats water ; water cools not love." The discovery of the source whence the fable was (though, as is probable, indirectly) derived is due to Herzberg (*Shakespeare Jahrbuch*, vol. xiii., 1878). He tracked the legend to a poem in the Anthology, by Marianus, written, as he thinks likely, in the fifth century after Christ :—

Τᾷδ' ὑπὸ τὰς πλατάνους ἀπαλῷ τετρυμένος ὕπνῳ
εὗδεν Ἔρως, νύμφαις λαμπάδα παρθέμενος·
Νύμφαι δ' ἀλλήλῃσι, τί μέλλομεν, αἴθε δε τούτῳ
σβέσσαμεν, εἶπον, ὁμοῦ πῦρ καδίης μερόπων.
Λαμπὰς δ' ὡς ἔφλεξε καὶ ὕδατα, θερμὸν ἐκεῖθεν
Νύμφαι Ἐρωτιάδες λουτροχοεῦσιν ὕδωρ.

"Here, under the plane-trees, Love, having placed his torch by the Nymphs, overpowered by gentle slumber, was sleeping. Then said the Nymphs to one another, 'Why do we delay? Would that we could put out, together with this, the fire in the heart of mortals!' But as the torch inflamed also the waters, the Love-nymphs from thence draw warm water for their bath."

The Epigram is ix. 627 of the Palatine Anthology. This and the following Sonnet are manifestly based upon the Epigram, though neither is properly a translation of it.

2 *A maid of Dian's.*—Similarly we have in the following Sonnet "many nymphs that vow'd chaste life to keep."

6 *Dateless.*—Eternal. Cf. xxx. 6. "Heat perpetual" in the next Sonnet.

8 *Strange.*—Q. has "strang," which might possibly represent "strong."

11 *Bath.*—The idea of a reference to the city of Bath can scarcely seem very probable, whatever may be true as to Shakespeare's fondness for puns.

14 *Eyes.*—Q. has "eye."

CLIV.

The little Love-god lying once asleep,
Laid by his side his heart-inflaming brand,
Whilst many nymphs that vow'd chaste life to keep
Came tripping by; but in her maiden hand
The fairest votary took up that fire
Which many legions of true hearts had warm'd;
And so the general of hot desire
Was, sleeping, by a virgin hand disarm'd.
This brand she quenched in a cool well by,
Which from love's fire took heat perpetual,
Growing a bath and healthful remedy
For men diseas'd; but I, my mistress' thrall,
Came there for cure, and this by that I prove,
Love's fire heats water, water cools not love.

CLIV. This Sonnet resembles so closely that preceding that no additional introductory remarks seem necessary.

2 *Laid by his side*, &c.—Neither here nor before is there any indication of the brand being brought purposely near to the nymphs (παρθέμενος).

7 *The general.*—The chief cause and promoter. The sense is somewhat different in *Romeo and Juliet*, Act v. sc. 3, line 219, "And then will I be general of your woes."

12 *Thrall.*—Subject, slave.

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LADY FITTON AND HER TWO DAUGHTERS, FROM THE TOMB AT GAWSWORTH.

THE HERBERT-FITTON THEORY

OF

SHAKESPEARE'S SONNETS

A Reply

BY

THOMAS TYLER, M.A.

EDITOR OF "SHAKESPEARE'S SONNETS," WITH INTRODUCTION AND NOTES, AND OF THE FIRST EDITION OF THE SONNETS (1609) IN FACSIMILE; AUTHOR OF "THE PHILOSOPHY OF 'HAMLET,'" ETC. ETC.

"Pluck a red rose from off this thorn with me."

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THE HERBERT-FITTON THEORY

A Reply

"WITH the disposal of the allegation that 'Mr. W. H.' represented the Earl of Pembroke's youthful name, the whole theory of that Earl's identity with Shakespeare's friend collapses." Thus asserts Mr. Sidney Lee in the *Fortnightly Review* for February 1898. The fabric, then, the foundation of which was laid some seventy years since, is gone, disappearing with the assault made on "one of the buttresses" by the redoubtable champion just named. Yet, after searching scrutiny, the building seems to me to stand more firmly than ever, without having suffered the slightest crack or fissure. The "collapse" must surely be a dream of Mr. Lee's. And when one considers the huge labour entailed on the editor by publishing every three months a volume of that prodigious work, the *Dictionary of National Biography*, and by previously weighing and assessing the merits of the multitudinous claimants to a place in the Temple of Fame, it need not in the least excite wonder, if the doorkeeper has for a moment "nodded o'er his keys." One is tempted the more strongly to take such a view of the matter by the fact that, in the article on "William Herbert" in the *Dictionary* (1891), Mr. Lee asserted that "Shakespeare's young friend was doubtless Pembroke himself, and 'the dark lady' in all probability was Pembroke's mistress, Mary Fitton."

In asserting that the designation "Mr. William Herbert" could never, in the mind of Thomas Thorpe or any other contemporary, have denominated the Earl at any moment

of his career, Mr. Lee displays a want of accurate knowledge concerning the use and value of proper names and titles of dignity in Shakespeare's days, such as may seem unlikely to promote a reputation for extended and intimate acquaintance with Elizabethan history and literature. However strange the fact may at first sight appear, yet fact it is, that the personal name was not then merged in the title to the extent that it is at present, notwithstanding our alleged advance towards a pure democracy. The case of Thomas Sackville, pointed out by the late Professor Minto, though controverted by Mr. Lee, is very much to the purpose. Sackville had gained distinction as a poet when, in 1567, at an age somewhat over thirty, he was created Baron Buckhurst. "From this period to the day of his death," says his biographer, the Hon. and Rev. R. W. Sackville West, "he was almost wholly occupied with public affairs." In 1600, when he had been Baron Buckhurst for some three-and-thirty years, and when it might have been supposed that the "Thomas Sackville" would have been merged in "Lord Buckhurst," appeared the poetical collection entitled *England's Parnassus*. This collection contains again and again pieces with the accompanying name given as "M. (that is Mr., or Maister) Sackville," this name being, however, variously spelled. Nor is this all. Sackville's poetical "Induction," preceding "The Complaint of Henry Stafford, Duke of Buckingham," in the *Mirror for Magistrates*, had gone through repeated editions with the same prefix (Maister) to Sackville's name. In the prefatory "Epistle" to the Second Part of the *Mirror* (1578) we have pretty clear proof of the use of the name Sackville and the title Buckhurst contemporaneously: "I, without any further determination, gallopped through the rest, which when leysure shall give you leave to reade, ceasse then to thinke on the L. Buchurst or Sackuyll, let Gascon and Churchyarde be forgotten." Again, the tragedy of *Ferrex and Porrex*, or *Gorboduc*, with which Sackville was credited as being partly

the author, was first published in 1565. Subsequently appeared the second and the third editions, the last named in 1590, and it is very noticeable that it bears the title *The Tragedie of Gorboduc, whereof three Actes were written by T. Norton and the two last by T. Sackvyle.* Here we may observe not only that the printer and publisher would seem to have been under no fear of being called to account by the Star Chamber or any other legal authority for "defamation," as, it would seem, they ought to have been. They do not even give Sackville the honorific prefix M. or Maister, though, according to Mr. Lee, he came into the world possessing this: he "was born plain 'Mr. Sackville.'" And it is important, as showing the difference with respect to the matter under consideration between Elizabethan times and our own, that now under similar circumstances, whether the publication was authorised or not, we should in all probability have the name exchanged for the title, or at least there would be added, to make the work somewhat more inviting to purchasers, "*now* Lord Buckhurst." Titles, it would seem, were viewed differently in Elizabethan times, and therefore what Mr. Lee says about "Viscount Cranborne" and "Mr. James Cecil" cannot be regarded as pertinent.

Late in life Sackville became Earl of Dorset. Joshua Sylvester published subsequently a translation from Du Bartas, with a sonnet dedicating one of the parts of this translation "To the right Honorable the Earle of Dorset," &c. But not only was an anagram on the name "Sacvilus" appended; the twelfth line of the sonnet is—

"This Tract I sacre unto Sackuil's name."

The name, it should be observed, is neither "Dorset" nor "Buckhurst," though either the one or the other would have suited the metre. Another portion of the work was dedicated "To the Right Honourable the Earle of Pembroke." But here again the name "William Harbert" is

appended, and an anagram, "With liberall arm," answering to the line—

"Whose noble Bounty all the Muses binds;"

a line which may remind us of what Shakespeare says in Sonnet 53 concerning a "bounty" like "the foison of the year."

But to return to Sackville. The allegation that his poetry was all written before he was knighted or became a peer will give no adequate explanation of the facts which have been mentioned. There still remains a difference from the usage of our own times. And supposing that the "M." or "Mr." was scrupulously employed with regard to Sackville's status during his literary career, it can scarcely be denied that there could not possibly have been any "defamation" in calling a nobleman by his proper personal name. A similar scrupulousness to that observed in the case of Lord Buckhurst would require that, when the Sonnets were published in 1609, the title "Earl of Pembroke" should not be employed. The name to be employed would rather be such as would have been suitable at the time when, by his acquaintance with Shakespeare, he became the "begetter" of the Sonnets. This name, we are assured, would not be "William Herbert," but the courtesy title "Lord Herbert." Even apart from what has been just before said concerning titles and personal names, there was an obvious reason why the designation "Lord Herbert" should not be employed. It would not have distinguished Shakespeare's patron from at least one other Lord Herbert (see my Introduction to the Sonnets, p. 54). And if this designation were abbreviated into "Lord H." it would become exceedingly ambiguous.

Now, however, we have to meet the allegation that such an "insignificant publisher" or "adventurer in setting forth" (finding the money, no doubt, to pay for the printing) "was incapable of venturing on the meaningless mis-

nomer of 'Mr. W. H.'" It was for him to "creep into the presence" of a nobleman such as the Earl of Pembroke "with a kind of religious address," in accordance with what was said by Heminge and Condell in dedicating the First Folio of Shakespeare's Plays to Pembroke and his brother: "We have justly obserued no man to come neere your LL. but with a kind of religious addresse." Heminge and Condell, however, "protest too much," as they do when they assure their readers that they present the plays "absolute in their numbers," as Shakespeare "conceived them." It may be convenient to give here for facility of comparison the dedication to the Sonnets:—

"To the Onlie Begetter of these Insuing Sonnets Mr. W. H.
All Happinesse and that Eternitie Promised by Our Euer-liuing Poet
Wisheth the Well-wishing Aduenturer in Setting Forth.—T.T."

On a first view it may well seem improbable, if this dedication was addressed by Thorpe to the Earl of Pembroke, that the same person can the next year (1610) have presented to the same nobleman such a dedication as that prefixed to Healey's translation of Augustine's *City of God*:—

"To the Honorablest Patron of Muses and Good Mindes, Lord William Earle of Penbroke, Knight of the Honourable Order, &c.

"Right gracious and gracefull Lord, your late imaginary, but now actuall Trauailer, then to most-conceited Viraginia; now to almost-concealed Virginia; then a light, but not lewde, now a sage and allowed translator; then of a scarce knowne nouice, now a famous Father; then of a deuised Country scarse on earth, now of a desired Citie sure in heauen; then of Vtopia, now of Eutopia; not as by testament, but as a testimonie of gratitude, obseruance, and heart's-honour to your Honor, bequeathed at hence-parting (thereby scarse perfecting) this his translation at the imprinting to your Lordships protecting. He that against detraction beyond expectation, then found your sweete patronage in a matter of small moment, without distrust or disturbance in this worke of more worth, more weight, as he approued his more abilitie, so would not but expect your Honours more acceptance."

The conclusion of this dedication deserves particular notice :—

"And as translators are onely tyed to haue, and give true vnderstanding: so are they freer than the authors to sute themselues a Patrone. Which as to Scipio, the staffe and stay, the type and top of that Cornelian stemme, *in quam, ut plura genera in unam arborem, videtur insita multorum illuminata sapientia*, your poore Pacuvius, Terence, or Ennius, (or what you list, so he be yours) thought most conuenient to consecrate. Wherefore his legacie laide at your Honours feete, is rather here deliuered to your Honours humbly thrise-kissed hands by his poore delegate.—Your Lordships true-deuoted,

"Th. Th."

Mr. Lee disavows the idea of any "mystification" on the part of Thorpe. Yet here there is most certainly mystification. From the mention of a "legacy" it may seem that Healey was already dead. But this was probably not the case. He may have gone for a time on the Continent, or the "hence-parting" may be a fiction. What, however, I would particularly insist on is, that this dedication, though signed "Th. Th.," was in all probability the work of Healey himself. The Latin quotation has in the margin "Cic. in Brut." But on comparing Cicero's *Brutus* (lviii. 213) it is found that the quotation departs considerably, and evidently not by accident, from the original text, which gives (P. Scipio having been just previously mentioned), "et tamquam in unam arborem plura genera, sic in istam domum multorum insitam atque illigatam sapientiam." Whatever may have been Thorpe's literary attainments, I know no reason for supposing that he was a classical scholar, and a scholar able to make the modification to be seen in the Latin words of this dedication. We are thus led towards the conclusion—one not unimportant for our present purpose—that the dedication was substantially the work of Healey himself.

This conclusion is strengthened when we take into account what is said in the dedication of the *Citie of God* concerning a translation by Healey previously committed to Pembroke's

"sweet patronage." The allusion is, no doubt, to Healey's *Discovery of a New World*, a book based on Joseph (afterwards Bishop) Hall's *Mundus alter et idem*, though without being an exact translation. The conclusion of the dedication "To the True Mirror of Truest Honour, William Earle of Pembroke" is :—

"Such am I: consecrated to your Lordships seruice: and vnder the protection of this mine owne zeale, aduenture to present you with A discouerie and no discouerie, of a world and no world, both knowne and vnknowne, by a traueller that never trauelled. Written first in Latine, and no Latine, and now translated, and yet not translated, by the same man, yet not the same man that first of all pend it.—Your Honours most zealously deuoted: I.H."

Here the similarity of style with that of the dedication of the *Citie of God* is at once seen. The dedication to Pembroke in 1616 of a volume containing translations of "Epictetus Manuall, Cebes' Table, Theophrastus' Characters," all executed by John Healey, may furnish additional evidence of "mystification":—

"To the Right Honorable William Earle of Pembroke, Lord Chamberlaine to his Maiestie, one of his most Honourable Priuie Counsell, and Knight of the most noble Order of the Garter, &c.

"Right Honorable,—It may worthily seeme strange vnto your Lordship, out of what frenzy one of my meanenesse hath presumed to commit this sacriledge, in the straightnesse of your Lordships leisure, to present a peece, for matter and model so vnworthy, and in this scribling age, wherein great persons are so pestered dayly with Dedications. All I can alledge in extenuation of so many incongruities, is the bequest of a deceased man; who (in his life time) having offered some translations of his vnto your Lordship, euer wisht if these ensuing were published, they might onely bee addressed vnto your Lordship: * * * pardon my presumption, great Lord, from so meane a man, to so great a person; I could not without some impiety present it to any other; such a sad priuiledge haue the bequests of the dead, and so obligatory they are, more than the requests of the liuing: In the hope of this honourable pardon and acceptance I will euer rest—Your Lordships humble deuoted, T. Th."

Now, when Thorpe speaks of the "strangeness," the "frenzy," the "sacrilege," displayed in his addressing Lord Pembroke, it may well seem an unavoidable inference that he had never before addressed a dedication to that nobleman, and also that "Mr. W. H." must have been some other person. But such an inference would certainly be erroneous. We have seen that the dedication in 1610 of the *Citie of God* was signed by Thorpe. The discrepancy is not entirely removed even if we come to the conclusion that the dedication just mentioned was substantially the work of Healey. On this evidence, then, we can scarcely go beyond the inference that, if "Mr. W. H." was the Earl of Pembroke, probably the dedication of the Sonnets was either in part or wholly the work of some person other than Thorpe. It should be added, however, that when Thorpe, in the dedication last quoted, speaks of the wish of the "deceased man," that "if these ensuing were published," they might be dedicated to Pembroke, it may seem a just inference that he was offering an entirely new and previously unpublished book. How far such an inference would be from the truth may be easily shown. There had been issued, in fact, an edition of the same book (excepting only the Theophrastus) in 1610. Nor is this all. The edition had been published by Thorpe, and the dedication, addressed to John Florio, was signed by him "Th. Th." (though, again, it shows pretty clear traces of Healey's participancy). Thorpe therefore could not plead ignorance when, in 1616, he spoke of the book he was dedicating as though entirely new. Here surely it will not be contended that this was "a kind of religious address." But a word more may be said here as to the alleged obeisance and awe with which Pembroke was approached. John Davies, of Hereford, a writing-master, by the way, and certainly not a great poet, dedicated in 1602 his *Mirum in Modum* "To the most noble, iudicious, and my best beloued Lorde, William Earle of Pembrooke; the most honorable Sir Robert Sidney Knight, Lord Gouernor

of Vlishing; and the right right worshipful Edward Herbert of Mountgomery Esquire, my most honored and respected Friendes." This was certainly not "a kind of religious address," especially as coming from a man like Davies, who, it would seem, was making his *début* on the literary stage. But in point of familiarity, or, at least, lack of "religious" awe, Davies could go somewhat further. In 1606 he dedicated his *Select Second Husband for Sir Thomas Ouerberie's Wife, now a Matchlesse Widow*, to "the right Noble for all that is in Nobility, Art, or Nature, William Earle of Pembroke," &c.

> "Wit and my Will (deere Lord) were late at strife,
> To whom this Bridegroome I for grace might send,
> Who Bride was erst the happiest husbands wife
> That ere was haplesse in his Friend, and End.
> Wit, with it selfe, and with my Will, did warre,
> For Will (good-Will) desir'd it might be YOU:
> But Wit found fault with each particular
> It selfe had made; sith YOU were it to view," &c.

Here there is probably a covert allusion even to Pembroke's Christian name, which may remind us of Sonnets 135, 136.

What has been said may suffice to show that there is nothing incredible in the supposition that, in 1609, Pembroke was designated by his personal name, nor does the form of the dedication of the Sonnets (which may have been in part suggested by Shakespeare) present any insuperable difficulty. As to the use of initials only, it should be remembered that at the time in question initials were employed under circumstances in which at the present time such abbreviation might be considered unsuitable. We ought also not to forget the probable suggestion that some measure of concealment was intended.

There is another matter which may be conveniently mentioned here, and which is far too important to be omitted. According to Mr. Lee, "Of one alleged point of resemblance there is no evidence. The loveliness assigned to Shakespeare's youth was not, as far as we can learn, ever

set to Pembroke's account." Now, if this were true, though it would not absolutely disprove the identity of Pembroke with the hero of the Sonnets, yet it would be certainly unfavourable to such identification. We might indeed point to the evidence which we possess as to the beauty of Pembroke's mother and his brother Philip. This, however, would be open to objection. But fortunately we have testimony which can scarcely be regarded as other than conclusive. It is, moreover, of the date 1602, the next year after the conclusion of the Sonnet-period, but a brief period after that when Shakespeare wrote—

> "For as you were when first your eye I eyed,
> Such seems your beauty still."

I allude to the dedication to Pembroke of Francis Davison's *Poetical Rhapsody*:—

> "To the most Noble, Honourable, and Worthy Lord, WILLIAM EARLE OF PEMBROKE, LORD HERBERT OF CARDIFFE, MARMION, and SAINT QUINTINE.
>
> "Great Earle, whose high and noble minde, is higher
> And nobler, then thy noble high Degree:
> Whose outward shape, though it most louely bee,
> Doth in faire Robes a fairer Soule attier:
> Who Rich in fading Wealth, in endlesse Treasure
> Of Vertue, Valour, Learning, richer art:
> Whose present greatnes, men esteeme but part
> Of what by line of future hope they measure.
> Thou worthy Sonne, vnto a peerelesse MOTHER,
> Thou Nephew to great SIDNEY of renowne,
> Thou that deseru'st thy Coronet to crowne
> With Lawrell Crowne, a Crowne excelling t'other;
> I consecrate these Rimes to thy great Name,
> Which if thou like, they seeke no other fame.
>
> "*The deuoted Admirer of your Lordships noble virtues,*
> "FRA. DAVISON
> *humbly dedicates,*" &c.

In accordance with what I have said, the third line and what follows can scarcely be regarded as other than conclu-

sive with regard to Pembroke's reputation for beauty. And the ninth line may be compared with the ninth and tenth lines of the third Sonnet :—

> "Thou art thy Mother's glass, and she in thee
> Calls back the lovely April of her prime."

The question fundamental to any acceptable theory of the Sonnets is that relating to the chronology. A self-consistent chronology is indispensable in the identification of either the beautiful youth or the dark lady. With regard to this subject it is not necessary for me to repeat what was said in the third and succeeding chapters of my Introduction ; neither can I pass under review the various accordant particulars indicated in the chapter on "William Herbert." There is one matter, however, which seems of too great importance to be omitted. It has been intimated above that 1601 is the year which concludes the Sonnet-period. Sonnet 103 speaks of an interval of three years as having elapsed since Shakespeare made the acquaintance of his young friend and patron. We are thus brought to the year 1598. This date having been attained, it was the good fortune of the late Rev. W. A. Harrison to discover that letters preserved at the Record Office conclusively show that in August and September of 1597 there were negotiations (which reached an advanced stage) for the marriage of Herbert to Bridget, granddaughter of the great Lord Burleigh. Why the match was broken off does not appear, but the probability is that Herbert backed out of it, notwithstanding the wishes of his father and mother. This view is in accordance with Sonnet 40, line 8 :—

> "By wilful taste of what thyself refusest."

But what is of chief importance is, that previously it had been felt to be a difficulty that Shakespeare should, in Sonnets 1 to 17, exhort a youth of eighteen to marry and become a father. This difficulty now disappeared.

It may be said, indeed, that the evidence altogether is not of equal cogency with the demonstration that the three angles of a triangle are together equal to two right angles. This may be freely granted, and if such a demonstration is required, the Sonnet-problem is no doubt insoluble. The possible evidence is of a different nature, yet it may be maintained that this evidence is equally decisive with that on which, in practical matters, action is taken. "Probability," said Bishop Butler, "is the guide of life."

To discuss the position that Shakespeare addressed to Henry Wriothesley, Earl of Southampton, Sonnets 1 to 126 either wholly or in part, has seemed to me superfluous. The reader who may be desirous of considering this matter may be referred to the article on "Shakespeare's Sonnets. The Case against Southampton," written by Mr. William Archer with his usual ability (*Fortnightly Review*, December 1897). Neither does it seem necessary to waste time and paper in refuting the position that the Sonnets are exercises in verse with no definite relation to actual facts and persons.

We come then to the heroine of the Sonnets, the dark lady of Sonnet 127, &c. Concerning the only identification which, so far as I know, possesses even the semblance of probability, Mr. Lee remarks, "If Pembroke's identity with 'Mr. W. H.' be disproved, Mary Fitton quits the scene, as far as Shakespeare and his Sonnets are concerned, for ever." This would not be necessarily true if the attempt at disproof with regard to "Mr. W. H." had been successful. And how very far Mr. Lee has been from attaining success, the reader has, I suppose, sufficiently seen. There would be, moreover, under any circumstances, a remarkable agreement between various particulars relating to the heroine of the Sonnets and what we otherwise know of the character and conduct of Mrs. Mary Fitton. We are, however, met at once by the inquiry, Was not Mary Fitton a lady of fair, or comparatively fair, complexion, with grey eyes, and brown hair, while incontestably the heroine of the Sonnets

had black hair and black eyes? To this question I reply that, according to the only reliable testimony which we possess, Mary Fitton had both black hair and black eyes. I allude to the painted statue in Gawsworth church, the authenticity of which is undisputed. This monument (a partial reproduction from which is now given) represents Lady Alice Fitton seated, with her two sons Edward and Richard kneeling before her, and her two daughters Anne and Mary kneeling behind, Mary being in the rear. "These figures" (says the late Mr. J. P. Earwaker in his *History of East Cheshire*, vol. ii. p. 582) "are all habited in the costume of the early part of the seventeenth century." In a note on the same page Mr. Earwaker says, "It is probable that the square altar-tomb, on which Lady Alice Fitton is resting her arm, was her husband's tomb, and may have had his effigy on the top." And he quotes from "MS. Cheshire Church Notes" which he possessed, and of which he gives the date "about the year 1633" (vol. i. p. xxvi.), "Sir Edward Fitton his Monument in y^e^ chancell. Note y^e^ 2 Sons and 2 Daughters are portraied on either side y^e^ monument, and y^e^ sonnes are neer y^e^ head." From there being no mention of the figure of the mother, who died on January 4, 1626–7, it would seem probable that a place had been reserved for her statue, though it had not yet been erected when the note was made (? 1629). When the mother died, Mary's two brothers and her sister were already dead, so that probably the monument received substantially its present form under her superintendence. This of course leaves out of account obvious mutilations, and the probable disappearance of a recumbent effigy of the father. The date of Mary's death is given by Lady Newdegate (after researches by Mr. C. G. O. Bridgeman) as 1647.

Mr. Bridgeman, in an Appendix to the new edition of Lady Newdegate's *Gossip from a Muniment Room*, admits that on the monument at Gawsworth "she is represented with black hair and dark complexion," but he

suggests as a reason for this that the marble "has been exposed to the dust and grime of centuries." From careful examination I can state positively that the blackness is not caused by "dust and grime." I have to traverse also another statement of Mr. Bridgeman's, namely, "that the hair of all the other figures, although not the moustache of her eldest brother, appears to be of the same black hue." The colouring of Anne's hair is much decayed, and the head of Richard is mutilated more than any of the others, so that in his case I doubt whether any opinion can be expressed. The hair of the eldest brother in front is, however, distinctly brown, in harmony with his fairer complexion. The coloured statue of Mary Fitton is thus in very substantial accord with the description of the dark lady in the Sonnets.

There are, however, certain old portraits in the gallery at Arbury, near Nuneaton, Warwickshire, which are alleged to be portraits of Mary Fitton, and which by no means agree with the Gawsworth statue. Since the publication of Lady Newdegate's book above mentioned, these portraits have attracted a good deal of notice. It has even been asserted that they give conclusive evidence against the identity of Mary Fitton with the Sonnet-heroine. Moreover, if any difficulty has previously existed, Mr. Lee assures us that "family history places the authenticity of the portraits beyond doubt, and the endeavour lately made by Mr. Tyler to dispute their authenticity will be satisfactorily met in the second edition of Lady Newdegate's book." I am afraid, however, that readers who may look for this satisfactory removal of difficulties will be disappointed. The details of "family history" mentioned are in great part such as were perfectly well known before. It is again admitted that there are several pictures with inscriptions which are "very inaccurate." This is in accordance with tolerably well-known experience as to old pictures in family collections. Photogravures of two portraits said to be portraits of Mary Fitton are given by Lady Newdegate. One is a double

portrait, supposed to represent Mary and her sister Anne (Lady Newdigate). The two ladies represented might very well be of the same age or nearly so. There can be little or no doubt that Anne is the handsome young lady to the spectator's left. She bears on her ruff a pansy, the Fitton emblem, which it is clear is depicted on the ruff merely for the sake of distinction, and not as embroidered upon it. The other lady to the spectator's right, the supposed Mary, has on her ruff, clearly placed also for the sake of distinction, what seems to be a carnation or clove. In her hand she has a pansy, but together with it other flowers. On her sleeves there are two devices: on the right a leaf of some kind, and on the left a sprig, apparently, of some plant. These devices are probably significant—as indeed was suggested to me when I saw the picture at Arbury—and, when taken together with the variation in the flowers in the hands and on the ruffs, may very well be taken as intended to prevent the mistake that the ladies were two sisters, as might otherwise be supposed. Mr. Bridgeman asserts that the identification of the two ladies with Anne and Mary Fitton can be made "with reasonable, if not with absolute certainty," though "no names are inscribed on the picture." He relies mainly on the words and figures painted no doubt long ago on the picture, "Anno dom 1592," and "Etatis sue 18" and "Etatis sue 15." If this is taken as meaning "eighteen years of age" and "fifteen years of age," then there is only approximate and not exact correspondence with the respective ages of Anne and Mary. But on this I need not insist. As there are no names, and taking into account the obviously intended diversity of floral symbols, it may well seem probable that the picture represents two intimate friends and not two sisters. Following Mr. Bridgeman's account, the supposed Mary Fitton "has dark blue-grey eyes, and brown hair of a distinctly lighter shade than the other, complexion fairer, and eyebrows less strongly marked." Taking the Gawsworth statue as certainly authen-

tic, we can scarcely avoid the conclusion that there is very considerable discrepancy. True, the colour of hair may change, becoming darker in later life; and when there was a prevalent taste for light-coloured hair and fairness of complexion, as there was in the time of Elizabeth, a painter might vary somewhat the tints he employed, in order to bring the characteristics of his patrons into better accord with such types as were fashionable. But still the statue could not probably represent the same person, even difference of age being taken into account. And there lies in the way of the proposed identification the obviously intended distinction in the floral emblems and devices. We may come, then, with probability, to the conclusion that the picture in question represents Anne Fitton (Lady Newdigate) and some intimate friend other than her sister.

With regard to the other portrait at Arbury alleged to be of Mary Fitton, and "in full Court dress," its identification rests mainly on a resemblance to the alleged younger girl in the double portrait. If in the double portrait Mary Fitton is not represented, then the portrait in Court dress must also be abandoned. The inscription on the picture, according to which it is a portrait of "Lady Macclesfield," who is described as daughter to Sir Edw. Fitton, and dame of honour to Queen Elizabeth, is certainly wrong; and we are scarcely brought nearer truth or probability by "the earliest existing catalogue of pictures at Arbury, belonging tc the eighteenth century." In this catalogue, Mr. Bridgeman tells us, the portrait is entered as "Daughter to S^{r} Ed^{d} Fitton, maid of honour to Queen Elizabeth and wife to the Earl of Macclesfield." The inscription on the picture and the entry in the catalogue are both wrong. It appears that there was an Earl of Macclesfield in the family, but he came two generations later, and he was not descended from either Anne or Mary Fitton. A mistake on this matter had been made, according to Mr. Bridgeman, prior to a note of correction written in 1686. Yet the mistake

was afterwards made, regardless of the correction. This is important with regard to the errors in the inscriptions of the portraits. But there is another portrait at Arbury, mention of which must not be omitted, though Lady Newdegate does not give an engraving of it in her book. This portrait, according to its inscription, is of the "Countess of Stamford, 2nd daughter of Sir Edw^{d} Fitton, Knt." This, again, would seem to denote Mary Fitton, though with the erroneous title of "Countess of Stamford." Moreover, it bears a resemblance to the alleged Mary Fitton in the double portrait. Mr. Bridgeman says, "The likeness (if any) to the other portraits is very superficial." But it should be remembered that portraits certainly painted from the same person have sometimes a "very superficial" resemblance one to another. At any rate, it would have been well for Lady Newdegate to give the public an opportunity of comparing and judging. And this was the more desirable, as a letter at Arbury renders the conclusion very probable that the Countess of Stamford's portrait is really a portrait of Mildred, Lady Maxey (*née* Cooke). And a question is thus suggested as to whether all three portraits are not portraits of Mildred Cooke, she belonging to a family of high repute in Elizabethan times. But whether this is so or not, it is sufficient for our present purpose that neither the three portraits, nor any one of them, is at all adequately authenticated as a portrait of Mary Fitton.

Entirely rejecting, then, the Arbury portraits as representing Mary Fitton, it may be remarked that the Gawsworth statue not only gives a lady with dark complexion and black hair, but also with an expression quite suitable to the heroine of the Sonnets, and to the character and conduct of Mary Fitton as otherwise known. Care seems to have been taken that the faces of the mother and the two daughters should be real portraits. That of the mother suggests the idea of its having been executed from a death-

mask. The features of Anne are in substantial agreement with those of Lady Newdegate's engraving of this lady as a widow, only the face is fuller, and without the indications of failing health. The portrait gives the impression of tallness, and in the monument Anne is evidently taller than either her sister or her brothers. Mary's face is fairly well, and not unfavourably, represented in the portrait accompanying my Introduction. The tip of the nose, however, is broken off on the monument, but this has been, almost of necessity, restored in the portrait.

On Pembroke's relations with Mary it is unnecessary to descant. He "confessed a fact," but apparently would not accept the paternity of the child which she had in or about March 1601. It is sufficiently clear from her father's letter, of May 1601, that there was a charge of want of "honesty," using the word in the Elizabethan sense. The letter of the same month from her great uncle, at Arbury, gives the impression of a great scandal such as to cause the father and daughter to "steal" off from London into Cheshire, and to lead her friends to cease from the efforts they had been making on her behalf. "How true," says the great uncle, "I know not;" but there was clearly some serious charge beyond the intrigue with Pembroke.

A word may here be added not quite inappropriately on the "Will" Sonnets (135, 136, 143). Mr. Lee gives a somewhat lengthy discussion with the view of showing that the lady of the Sonnets had not even a second lover with the name "Will." It was, I think, Mr. William Archer who said that, subsequently to composing these sonnets, Shakespeare himself would have probably failed to give a precise distinctive meaning to "Will" in each place. However, that two persons with the name "Will" are intended in 143 at any rate is sufficiently clear:—

> "So will I pray that thou mayst have thy Will,
> If thou turn back, and my loud crying still."

Mr. Lee is, I should say, not very likely to make many converts to his opinion, that

> "the poet represents the lady as temporarily deserting him in a somewhat hopeless chase of a wayward acquaintance, who, standing to her in the insipid relation of a feathered fowl to a housewife, has broken away from her. He finally expresses the hope that, whatever the result of her chase, she may return to him and have her "will" (*i.e.* may gratify her own and his—her lover Will's—desires)."

A more important question, perhaps, is whether there is not, in accordance with Mr. Archer's opinion, an allusion to at least three "Wills" in "*Will* to boot and *Will* in overplus," and in the "all but one," &c., of 135. Mr. Archer has made the suggestion with reference to Sir William Knollys, and the peculiar relation which, as revealed in Lady Newdegate's book, Sir William sustained to Mary. Though she was only his prospective bride, he uses language suitable to an actual husband. He speaks of himself as "the true husbandman," and of Mary as "the good ground." There was evidently an understanding or contract between the two which, as Mr. Archer suggests, would be suitably expressed by the phrase "bed-vow" (Sonnet 152). This view is not improbably correct, though I by no means abandon the opinion I have expressed (Introd. pp. 86, 87), that Mary may have been married in early youth, and that from some cause the marriage was set aside, or treated as null and void.

But what evidence is there of any relation between Mary Fitton and Shakespeare? An answer to this question is in part given by the known relations between Mary Fitton and Herbert, and by the agreement which exists between what is said in the Sonnets and various particulars in her character and conduct as well as her outward appearance. Beyond this, however, there is the important evidence furnished by Kemp's Dedication to his *Nine daies wonder*, pointed out by the late Rev. W. A. Harrison (Introd. p. 76 *sqq.*). Perhaps even more important is the agreement between Sonnet 127 and a part of *Love's Labour's Lost*, Act

iv. sc. 3, taken together with the fact that the play was published in 1598, as it had been acted at Court "this last Christmas" (Introd. 78 *sqq.*). But perhaps the most important evidence of all is the mention of "thy name" in 151 taken together with the context. Unfortunately there is here a play on the name "Fitton," such as, whatever may have been the case in Elizabethan times, would be regarded now as indecorous, to use a mild expression. With respect to this piece of evidence, as in various other respects, I am glad to have the support of the distinguished Danish critic, Dr. George Brandes. "Fitton" was certainly taken contemporaneously as equivalent to "fit one." To this I may add the following extract from my notes on the sonnet: "It is not very difficult to suggest a possible play on the name in two ways. As to the play on 'fit,' compare *Cymbeline,* Act iv. sc. 1," where both "fit" and "fitness" are employed. As to the other possible play on the name the use of "fit" in *Love's Labour's Lost*, Act iv. sc. 1, l. 145, may be compared. A regard for propriety forbids an explicit statement. The words of 151, "proud of this pride," "his triumphant prize," would obviously refer to Mary Fitton's high social position as "a maid of honour."

In conclusion, I may observe that, notwithstanding the Arbury portraits, and the positive assertions of Mr. Lee and others, I see no reason to doubt the eventual general acceptance of "the Herbert-Fitton theory of Shakespeare's Sonnets."

NOTE.

With respect to the portrait at Arbury on panel which, from a letter also preserved there, may be inferred with probability to be the portrait of Mildred, Lady Maxey, *née* Cooke (*supra*, p. 19), and which may give a clue leading to the truth concerning the supposed portraits of Mary Fitton, Mr. Bridgeman has alleged that this portrait may represent another friend of Anne Fitton (Lady Newdigate), namely, Lady Elizabeth Grey. But, on examining the provisions of Lady Newdigate's will, I find that the portrait of Lady Grey was bequeathed

to Mary Newdigate by her mother. And there is no reason to doubt that when Mary married, and lived elsewhere, the portrait of her godmother (*G. F. M. R.*, p. 16) was removed from Arbury, if not before. Of its being returned there appears no trace of evidence. Further, into whose possession came the portrait of Mary Fitton on a "tablet," which Lady Newdigate bequeathed to her daughter Lettice, after the early death of Lettice, and the administration to her estate by her brother Richard, it would seem impossible to say. The description in the will, which is probably that of a small picture, would appear not to suit any picture now at Arbury.

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